



Middle Gorge
NEW RIVER GORGE
National River • West Virginia

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Development Concept Plan / Interpretive Prospectus

February 1994

Middle Gorge **NEW RIVER GORGE**

National River • West Virginia



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SUMMARY

This *Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus* describes actions proposed for development, use, and protection of resources in the central portion ("Middle Gorge") of the New River Gorge National River. Following guidance in previous more general planning documents, the plan presented in this document stresses a balance between traditional on-river activities and a variety of land-based activities. Some activities, like commercial whitewater rafting or vehicle-based primitive camping and fishing, are already common practice and attract knowledgeable special-interest visitors. Others, such as sightseeing, picnicking, and exploration of cultural resources along the river's edge or in local communities, are not yet common, but such activities might broaden the appeal of the Middle Gorge to local residents as well as visitors coming from outside the area.

The proposed development and use includes a formal launch facility at McCreery, which is expected to serve the needs of both private boaters and commercial outfitters. Some improvement in informal river-edge camping areas at Mill Creek, Grandview Sandbar, and Army Camp will provide easier access to these areas and will control sanitation and habitat disturbance problems yet not basically alter the simple minimum-facilities character of these traditional camping sites. Certain historic structures will be stabilized and given additional protection while further consideration is given to appropriate uses by visitors or admin-

istrative staff. Low-key interpretive developments such as simple signs and brochures are suggested rather than physical developments such as visitor centers and museum exhibits.

This plan was earlier presented as the preferred alternative in a group of four alternatives analyzed in a draft *Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus/Environmental Assessment* (NPS 1993). The three alternatives that were not selected provided a spectrum ranging from "no action" (continuation of present management) through heavy emphasis on recreation on the river to a stress on recreation and interpretation on land. The selected alternative ("D" in the previous document), with minor changes resulting from public and agency review of the environmental assessment, has become the plan presented in this final document.

Each of the alternatives considered met the basic planning objectives and addressed issues identified as important. The selected plan is a balance between on-river and shore-based camping that will provide adequate services to a diversity of visitors without heavy physical development, which might have altered the rural character and historic integrity of the Middle Gorge. The National Park Service considers this plan the most appropriate to guide development and use of this part of the New River Gorge National River for the next 5 to 10 years.

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INTRODUCTION

THE NATIONAL RIVER

This *New River Gorge: Middle Gorge Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus* represents another step in the planning, management, and development of the New River Gorge National River in West Virginia. The national river includes a portion of the New River and its narrow gorge as they traverse the Appalachian Mountains in southern West Virginia (see Location map).

The 50-mile long, 62,000-acre national river corridor, which runs from the town of Hinton in the south to just north of the US 19 bridge near Fayetteville, was created on November 10, 1978, by Public Law 95-625 "... for the purpose of conserving and interpreting outstanding natural, scenic and historic values and objects in and around the New River Gorge and preserving as a free-flowing stream an important segment of the New River in West Virginia for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."

In the years since the establishment of the New River Gorge National River, a number of planning documents have been prepared that set the stage for more detailed planning and established the philosophical framework for site-specific decision making. Those documents include statements of park purpose, significance, and management objectives.

Purposes

The purposes identified for New River Gorge National River are as follows:

Conserve and interpret outstanding natural, scenic, and historic values and objects in and around New River Gorge.

Allow resource-based recreation that does not impair resource values.

Significance

The following statements summarize the significance of resources at the national river:

Size and topographic relief make the gorge an outstanding scenic resource in West Virginia.

New River Gorge provides some of the best whitewater rafting in the eastern United States.

New River is one of the best warm-water stream fisheries in the state, especially for smallmouth bass.

New River is believed to be the oldest river on the North American continent.

The river corridor has resulted in unusual plant and animal diversity.

New River Gorge contains remains of mining and transportation of "smokeless" coal, which played a major role in America's industrial history.

Management Objectives

On the basis of the purpose and significance of the resources, a series of more specific management objectives was formulated for New River Gorge National River. These objectives represent goals toward which park management will work.

Protect and maintain the natural diversity of plants and animals.

Sustain the warm-water fishery while protecting natural diversity.

Preserve outstanding scenic views in and around the gorge — preserve the predom-

inant natural setting in the gorge from Interstate Highway 64 north and the rural pastoral scenery south of I-64.

Encourage visitors to use related interpretive and recreational sites outside the national river boundary.

Preserve coal mining, railroading, and other historic resources that best illustrate the park's significance.

In cooperation with others, achieve and maintain water quality to meet state standards allowing for primary human contact.

Develop a system of land-based and water-based recreational opportunities that allows visitors to experience the national river's resources without impairing natural, cultural, and scenic values.

Work with local towns and communities associated with New River to help perpetuate their character and vitality.

Work with communities to the extent possible to help them achieve maximum economic benefits related to park development without impairing natural and cultural resources.

Planning Units

To facilitate detailed planning and development, the national river corridor has been divided into a series of sections whose character and resources suggest they should be dealt with as separate planning units. A planning unit is a section of a park that has both physical and visitor use characteristics that differentiate it from other sections of the park. At New River Gorge National River there are four such geographic areas that have been designated as planning units. Moving from south to north (following the flow of the river) those units are Upper Gorge, Unit 1; Glade Creek, Unit 2; Middle Gorge, Unit 3; and Lower Gorge, Unit 4 (see Planning Units map).

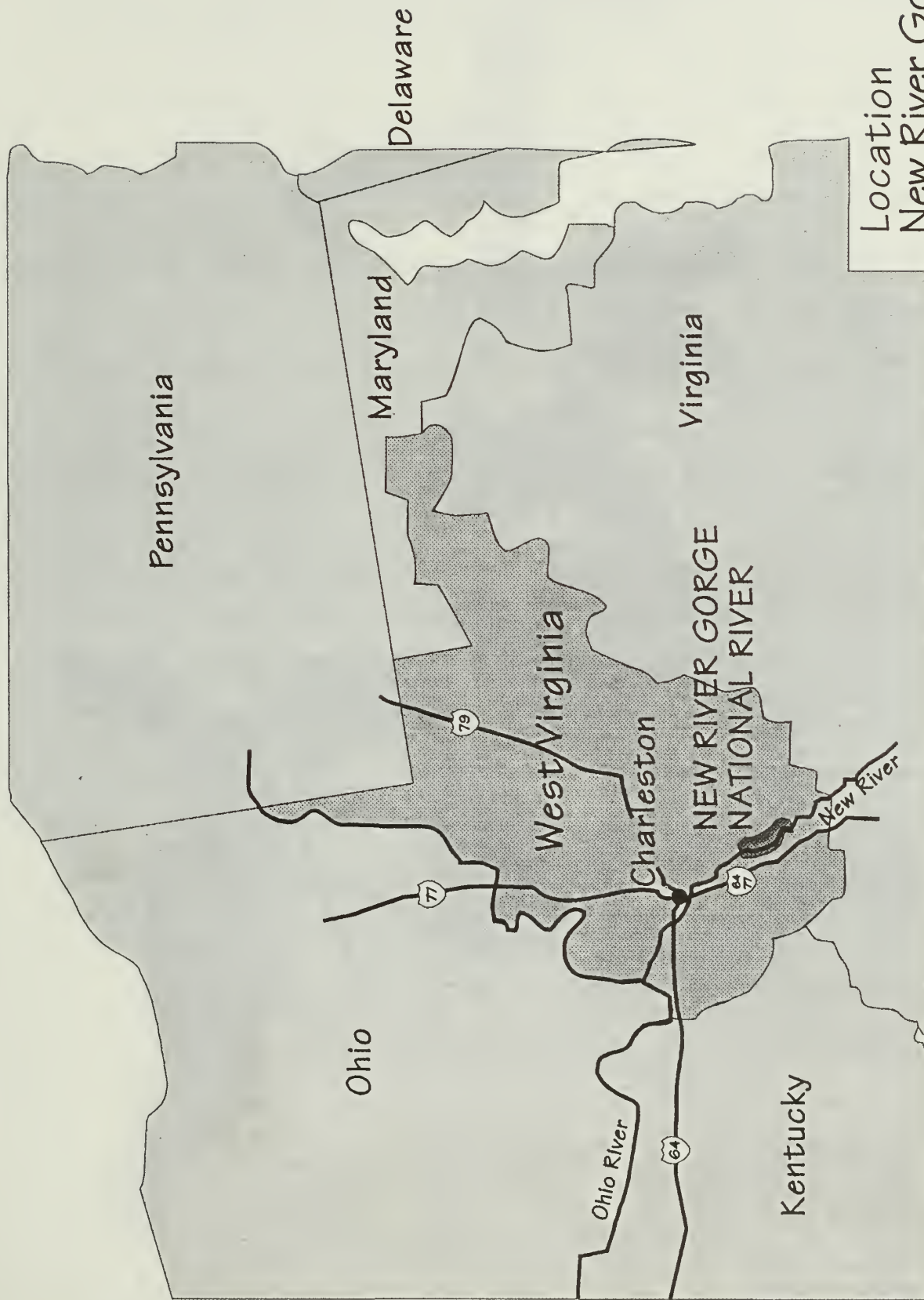
THE MIDDLE GORGE PLANNING UNIT

Several recent development concept plans have addressed major sites in the Middle Gorge: Stone Cliff, 1989; Glade Creek, 1990; Thurmond, 1992; and Grandview, 1993. This document addresses all remaining sites within the Middle Gorge Planning Unit.

The Middle Gorge is sinuous and steep-sided, cloaked in secondary growth of mixed hardwoods that have returned after intensive logging of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The New River itself is calmer here than in the lower gorge, offering whitewater rafting for relatively less experienced rafters, kayakers, and canoeists, as well as quiet stretches favored by boat-based anglers. Traditionally, local and regional visitors have camped and fished along the banks.

Unlike some units in the national river, the inner gorge in Middle Gorge is accessible via an all-weather, graded road (McKendree Road), which parallels the CSX Corporation (CSX) Railroad along the river's eastern (right) shore. A paved state road also crosses the unit; that road provides easy access to several small communities within the national river boundary. However, the character of the Middle Gorge remains rural and peaceful, disturbed only by passage of heavily laden coal trains, an occasional passenger train, and, increasingly, more adventurous motoring tourists hoping for glimpses of the quiet, secluded character of the nation's oldest living river.

The human history of the Middle Gorge was dominated in the 19th and early 20th centuries by the production and shipment of "smokeless" coal, a critical product fueling industrial development along much of the eastern seaboard. Small towns of that era nestled in the inner gorge along the Chesapeake and Ohio (now CSX) Railroad, and the prime economic forces of the Middle Gorge were maintenance of the rail system and the loading, mining, and transport of coal to a railhead. With depletion of local coal seams and development of alternative sources or fuels, local communities



Location
New River Gorge
National River

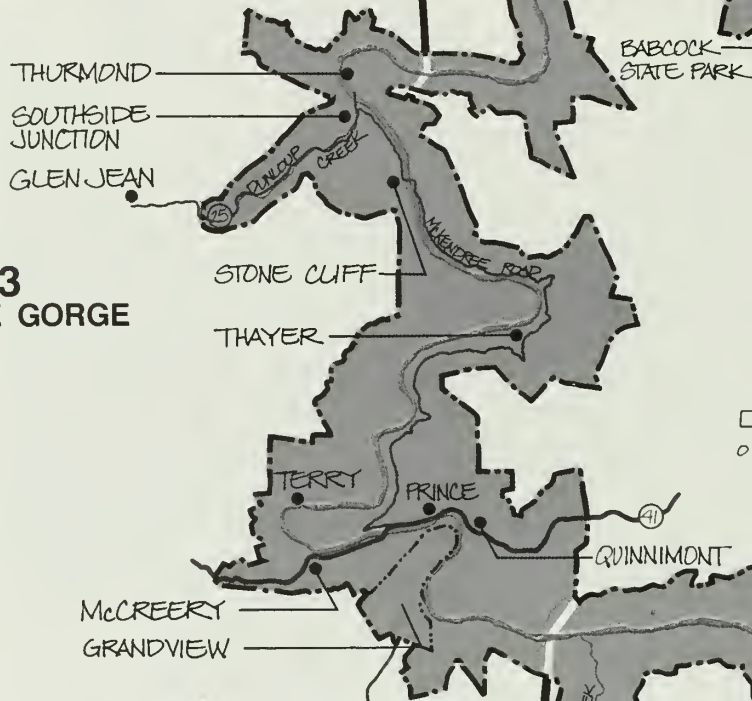
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
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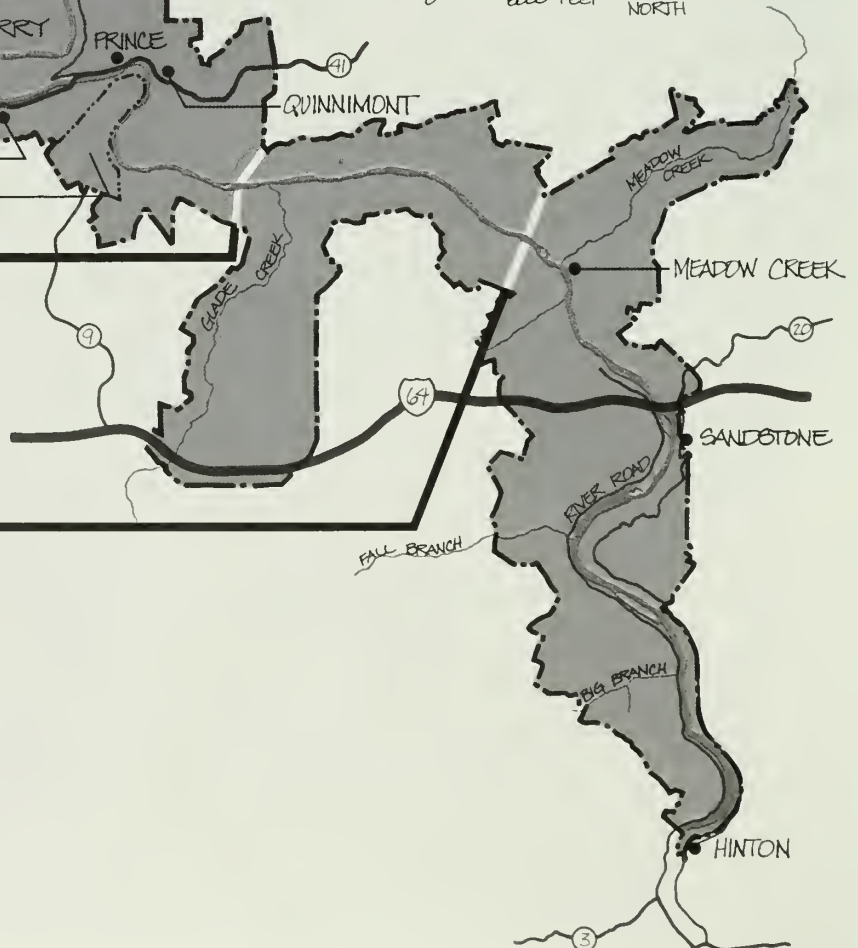
UNIT 4 LOWER GORGE



UNIT 3 MIDDLE GORGE



UNIT 2 GLADE CREEK



UNIT 1 UPPER GORGE

Planning Units

have shrunk gradually; some have disappeared altogether, while others continue with relatively few permanent residents whose livelihoods generally depend on work outside the immediate community. Since little modern

development of either residences or services has taken place in these communities, they continue to exhibit the rural architectural style and character of the historic era of mining and transportation.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide a specific course of action for resource preservation, interpretation, recreation, and physical development of the Middle Gorge Planning Unit. The area covered is the part of the planning unit from Mill Creek north to a point south of Stone Cliff (see Planning Units map). A separate study was prepared earlier to guide development of the part of the planning unit north of Stone Cliff, including the historic district of Thurmond.

In accordance with National Park Service policy and the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), this plan was selected only after a preliminary proposal and several alternatives were considered in a draft plan and environmental assessment (NPS 1993b).

NEED

A plan for the Middle Gorge is needed because site-specific planning has been done only for two small parts of this unit, Thurmond and Stone Cliff. Earlier documents made only general reference to the unit's character, visitor use potential, and management objectives. These generalities must be translated into specific site-by-site proposals that will not lead to unacceptable environmental consequences.

PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES

Previous Planning Background

As for other units of the national park system, planning and development of New River Gorge National River is proceeding from the general to the specific. The process began with a broad statement of the area's purpose and significance in the legislation establishing the park (1978) and continued with a more comprehensive conceptual statement called a

General Management Plan (NPS 1982). That statement was further refined with management and development guidelines (1988) and an interpretive program plan (1988). With guidance from those previous documents, New River is now moving to site-specific development concept plans. Several recent plans have addressed major sites within the Middle Gorge: Stone Cliff, 1989; Glade Creek, 1990; Thurmond, 1992; and Grandview, 1993. This document addresses all remaining sites in the Middle Gorge Planning Unit.

Planning Vision and Objectives

By returning to the basic purpose and significance statements it is possible to articulate a broad future vision of what the Middle Gorge should provide to the visiting public. It should be an area of the national river that retains its rural character, encourages quiet exploration of natural and cultural resources with a minimum of physical development, and allows simple access to the river's variety of recreational pursuits. This vision has been translated into a set of specific planning objectives, which are listed below.

To conserve the outstanding natural, scenic, and cultural resources of the Middle Gorge while retaining its rural character.

To provide a range of recreational opportunities for park visitors within the Middle Gorge, and to determine the type and scale of facilities and roads to serve both visitor and administrative needs.

To select appropriate location(s) for safe and efficient launching facilities for river rafters and boaters.

To minimize or avoid potential conflicts that may occur between park visitors and local residents as areas within the Middle Gorge are made more accessible and

more people come to enjoy the resources of New River Gorge National River.

To interpretively link various sites in the Middle Gorge so that they provide visitors with information necessary for a safe and enjoyable experience, and to foster understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the area.

Issues

Through public meetings and discussions with local groups and with commercial and private interests, the following specific issues were raised for consideration in this plan for development in the Middle Gorge.

Many visitors come to New River Gorge for exciting whitewater rafting opportunities. Others from both outside and nearby communities may be drawn for fishing, picnicking, camping, or enjoyment of the scenic beauty of the gorge from roads and trails. How should the recreational needs of a variety of visitors be met without infringement on the rights of any group, while the objective of preserving the area's resources is still met?

Where should access point(s) be developed in the planning area for people who want to fish, swim, and raft the river, and what kind of facilities are necessary?

As use of the Middle Gorge by both commercial and private boaters increases, what measures, if any, need to be considered to regulate this activity and ensure that resources along the river do not become overused? (Note that it is actually the state of West Virginia that has the responsibility for regulating all commercial watercraft services in the national river.)

What can be done to resolve complaints about visitor conduct at Grandview Sandbar and Army Camp?

Is there a way to preserve the rural lifestyle and character of Middle Gorge communities while at the same time encouraging and providing for additional visitor use and access?

How should the area's cultural and natural resource features be interpreted so as to communicate to visitors the rich history and beauty of New River Gorge?

What use, treatment, and interpretation are appropriate for buildings and other cultural resources that have been acquired by the National Park Service in the Middle Gorge planning area (such as Prince Brothers Store; Thayer Church; houses, churches, and coke ovens in Quinnimont; farmstead at Mill Creek; and McKendree Hospital site)?

Should the McKendree road be developed as a scenic road for park visitors or should it remain an unimproved access primarily for local residents? If it is to be a scenic route, what improvements are required and to what standard should the road be reconstructed?

What use(s) should be encouraged or developed at Army Camp and Grandview Sandbar?

Because the planning team was guided by the planning vision and objectives and focused on addressing the issues identified by the public, the National Park Service believes that the plan that has been selected is an appropriate and proper guideline for development and use of the Middle Gorge for the next 5 to 10 years.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

LANDOWNERSHIP/ EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

The Middle Gorge Unit is approximately 19 river miles long from the tributary of Mill Creek to just past Thurmond. This unit has approximately 30,000 acres, 95% of which are federally owned. With only a few exceptions, the federal government has not purchased small developed or undeveloped parcels within existing communities.

With few exceptions, lands on which development might take place under any of the alternatives are already in federal ownership. At McCreery, a portion of the shores of Piney Creek that support the abutments of the old railroad bridge is nonfederal, but negotiation for purchase of this land is underway.

For an overview of existing development and use, see Present Management and Use map.

Roads

Access to the Middle Gorge unit is by way of two roads owned and maintained by the state. West Virginia Route 41 is a paved two-lane road 24 feet wide that runs east and west in the southern part of the unit, and WV 25 is a paved two-lane, 20-foot road that connects Glen Jean to Thurmond. Both routes are in good condition, although in certain sections WV 25 is narrower than its nominal two-lane classification. This has raised safety concerns. A new asphalt overlay was applied to WV 25 in 1989. There has been some discussion of widening WV 25 in this section in anticipation of increasing visitor use of the Thurmond development.

McKendree road, a continuation of WV 25, is 13 miles long and 20 feet wide. This improved gravel road, which is owned and maintained by the state, runs north and south along the east bank of the New River (river right) from Thurmond to WV 41. Its condition from Thur-

mond to Thayer is basically sound, but it lacks adequate drainage and has some shoulder failure, and its gravel surface is typically potholed. From Thayer south to WV 41 it is somewhat narrower and rougher, and additional shoulder failures are apparent. High clearance or four-wheel-drive vehicles are recommended, especially during wet weather, and small landslides are fairly common.

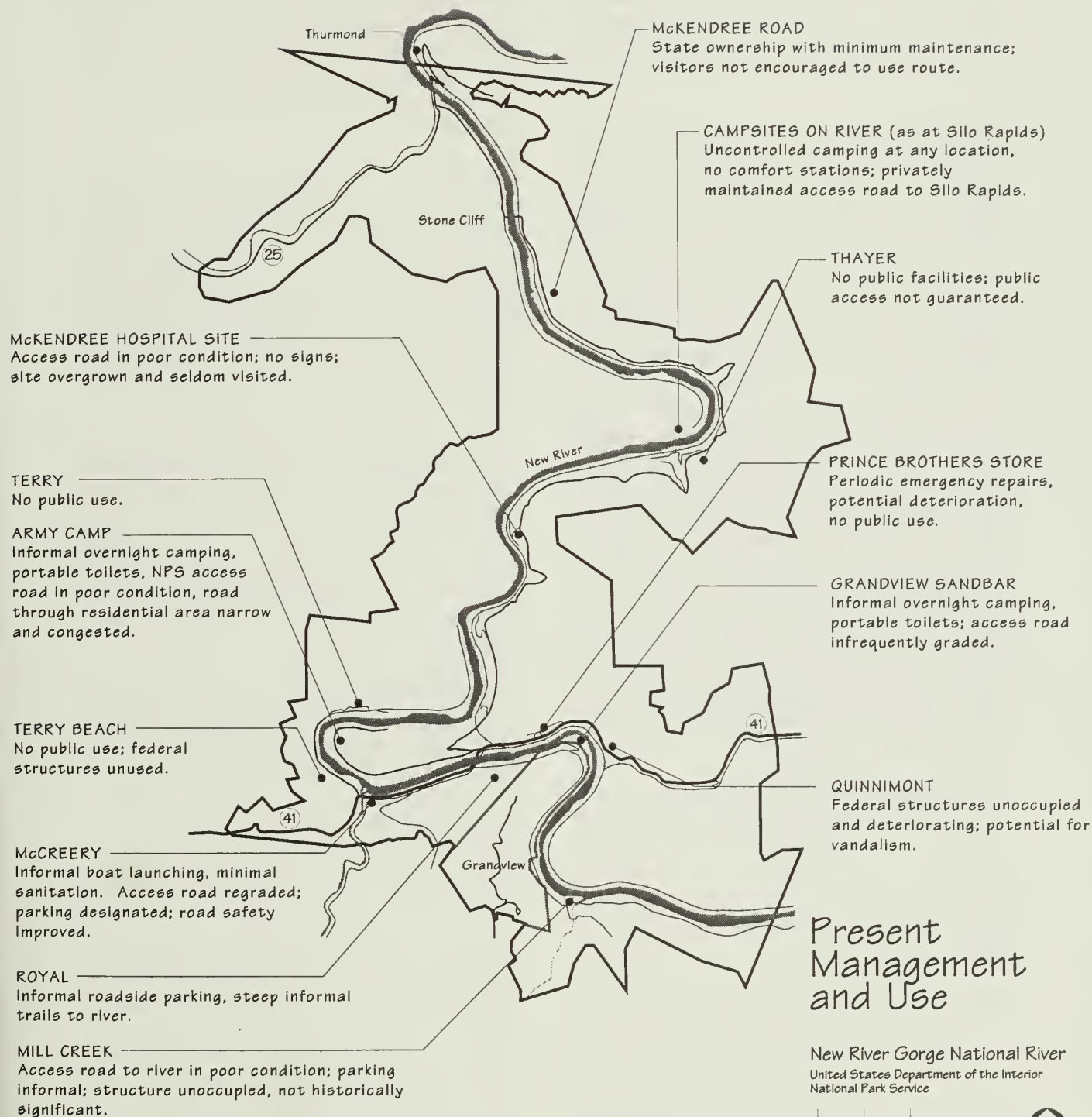
The Stone Cliff bridge, which is owned and maintained by the state, needs to be rehabilitated. The Federal Highway Administration and the West Virginia Department of Highways estimated the cost of rehabilitation at \$2.3 million in a 1988 engineering study. The deck and five truss members would have to be replaced to meet current standards. No state proposals to do this work are active at this time.

The state of West Virginia owns and maintains the 7-mile long gravel-surfaced spur road from WV 41 westward toward Army Camp, which is 18–20 feet wide. The road provides access to private residences in that area. The remaining ½ mile of unimproved road to Army Camp, which is on federal land, is the responsibility of the National Park Service.

The National Park Service owns and maintains the road to Royal, Mill Creek, and onward to Glade Creek (the "Royal road"), a two-way, 20-foot-wide graveled all-weather road open to passenger vehicles. Major surface shaping and graveling were completed in 1991.

Settlements and Visitor Use Sites

Mill Creek. The federally owned and managed Mill Creek site contains an informal parking area, a river launch, and an unoccupied deteriorating structure. The ¼-mile access road is an unimproved gravel road leading off the Royal road.



Quinnimont. A privately owned unincorporated residential community surrounded by federal land, Quinnimont has a U.S. post office. Several structures in this area are federally owned; most are vacant and deteriorating and have been targets of vandalism.

Grandview Sandbar. Federally owned Grandview Sandbar is used for informal day use, overnight camping, swimming, and fishing. Small boats are occasionally launched here to gain access to good fishing in the quiet waters downstream to McCreery. The National Park Service supplies portable toilet and trash facilities. The ¼-mile access road to the site from Royal road is rather steep but in good condition following graveling and grading in 1992.

Prince Brothers' Store. The federally owned Prince Brothers' Store, a national register property, once was a privately owned general store and post office. The federal government also owns an adjacent lot in the unincorporated town of Prince. The building, which is not open for public use, is adjacent to West Virginia Highway 41. The front of the building is only 4 feet off the edge of road, which would be a potentially unsafe situation if the structure were open to the public. The site is on a curve, resulting in potentially hazardous short sight distances for vehicles leaving and entering the adjacent parking area.

Royal. A site where a town once stood, Royal now exists only as a few scattered foundation walls among secondary timber growth. All federally owned, it is used as a river access point for bank fishing. There is informal parking along the Royal road with steep, informal trails leading to the river.

McCreery. The McCreery area, at the junction of Piney Creek and the New River, contains both privately owned and federally owned properties. An informal boat launch is used by both private and commercial boaters. The National Park Service provides minimal sanitation and trash facilities. Potential safety problems result from frequent congestion during commercial boat launching, lack of formal designated parking, and proximity to WV 41.

Terry Beach. A small group of privately owned houses along the river's edge and part of the unincorporated town of Terry, Terry Beach is approximately ½ mile west of McCreery along the road that leads to Terry. The federal government owns several lots in this area, two of which are directly on the river's edge. No public facilities are provided.

Army Camp. The National Park Service owns Army Camp, an informal overnight camping area offering unimproved access to the river for boating and fishing. The National Park Service provides portable toilet and trash facilities. Access is by way of a partially paved road. The narrow, congested road leads through a small area of privately owned residences.

Terry. A small, unincorporated settlement of private residences, Terry is easily accessible by a state-maintained 1-mile graveled road from the McCreery site on WV 41. The maintained road ends in Terry. An unmaintained four-wheel-drive track that led farther north along the west bank of the river for about 2 miles has been closed by a landslide for several years.

McKendree Hospital Site. All that remains of the McKendree Hospital, a medical facility that served mining communities in the gorge of the New River, are foundations of the structures and water system, much overgrown by trees. Visitors reach the site, all federally owned, by driving along McKendree road, then taking a rough, unmarked ¼-mile spur road that leads toward the river. No interpretation is provided.

Thayer. A small, unincorporated residential settlement, Thayer has no local government or commercial facilities. The only federally owned property in Thayer is a former Methodist Episcopal Church. Because of its location about midway between Thurmond and McCreery, Thayer has become a takeout site for certain river trips, especially at low water levels.

Campsites for Boater Use. At present, boaters take lunch breaks and camp overnight at undesignated sites along the bank of the New

River. The Silo Rapids area is one such undesignated site; there are several others. Current practices allow boaters to be self-policing in the use of the areas. Commercial outfitters that schedule overnight trips voluntarily carry out trash and human waste.

Trails

The Middle Gorge planning unit contains one formally designated hiking trail: the **Thurmond-Minden Trail**. A number of additional trails are being considered in other units as a part of the national river's trail plan, including portions of the **Mary Ingles Trail**, a proposed long-distance trail that would commemorate a historic escape route of an early settler in the New River area (NPS 1989d). However, because the Middle Gorge does not contain sufficient public land for a through trail to be considered, no further trails are being considered in this unit at this time.

NATURAL RESOURCES

A number of natural resource issues related to development in the Middle Gorge were identified in the draft document, and the potential for affecting threatened, endangered, or rare plant or animal species and floodplains and wetlands was examined.

Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species

Animals. No comprehensive surveys of the Middle Gorge have been done for habitat containing threatened or endangered species. However, the unit is within the range of several species listed as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), including the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the Virginia big-eared bat (*Plecotus townsendii virginianus*). In addition, in a study completed by the National Park Service and the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources in 1987, 14 mine portals within the

New River Gorge National River were found to be suitable habitat for bats and other species listed as category 2 candidates for listing as threatened or endangered (*Federal Register*, vol. 50, no. 181). These species could potentially be found in the Middle Gorge unit.

Amphibians also occur in the national river area, including several species of salamander (blackbellied and green) that are rare in West Virginia. There is also the potential for freshwater mussels and the eastern river cooter turtle, which are species of state concern.

Plants. The state of West Virginia does not maintain an officially designated list of rare or endangered species; however, a list of species of special concern is maintained by the West Virginia Natural Heritage Program. A "Rare Vascular Plant Survey" completed by the natural heritage program in 1986 lists species of both federal and state concern. The conclusion in that survey was that no unique habitats are found in the Middle Gorge. However, two rare plant species are found in the unit: Steel's meadowrue (*Thalictrum steeleanum*) and mountain bittercress (*Cardamine clematidis*). The presence of Steele's meadowrue has been documented east of Terry, north of Thayer, and along Stretcher Neck. The USFWS is considering this species for federal listing. Mountain bittercress occurs around the Stonecliff area, Army Camp, Stretcher Neck North, and Terry East, according to the 1986 survey. This species is not listed by the USFWS as endangered, threatened, or under review.

The "Resource Inventory and Analysis," prepared in 1989 by the Denver Service Center, National Park Service, notes that running buffalo clover (*Trifolium stoloniferum*), a federally listed endangered species, has been found near the McKendree Hospital site.

Considerably more site-specific information on plants and animals is being gathered in 1993–94. This will help to ensure that individual sites are adequately protected as development occurs.

Hydrology, Floodplains, and Wetlands

The flow of the New River, including the Middle Gorge, is controlled primarily by the Bluestone Dam, which is just upstream from Hinton. Since construction of the dam, the 100-year peak discharge of the New River has decreased from more than 150,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) to about 107,000 cfs, according to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Records from the gage at Hinton show an average annual flow of 7,865 cfs and a high average peak flow of 55,600 cfs.

The 1988 legislation that authorized the Gauley River National Recreation Area contains provisions for regulation of releases from the Bluestone Dam to protect and enhance downstream biological resources and recreational uses. The legislation also directs that the National Park Service, in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, further study the feasibility of adjusting water releases from the dam to augment periods of low flow.

In 1991, the USGS completed a draft report for the National Park Service entitled "Flood Investigation of the New River in the New River Gorge National River, West Virginia" (GS, USDI 1991). That report provides flood profiles for the 2-, 25- and 100-year flood events (see the McCreery Floodplain map).

No comprehensive wetland surveys have been completed in the New River Gorge National River, but one wetland has been identified in the Glade Creek area. Until a survey is completed in the Middle Gorge unit, the presence of other wetlands should not be ruled out. A number of riparian areas at Army Camp, McCreery, Mill Creek, and Grandview Sandbar may possess the vegetation, hydric soils, and hydrologic characteristics for designation under the federal criteria for wetlands.

Water Quality

Water quality in the New River is classified as suitable for human contact such as swimming and boating, for fishing, and for agricultural

and industrial uses. However, nonpoint pollution from erosion and uncontrolled runoff is a problem, especially during high volume discharge. Fecal coliform counts are high on occasion, and untreated sewage discharges from residential development occur throughout the unit. Of particular concern are occasional events of poor water quality in and around the mouth of Piney Creek, where the proposed McCreery launch facility is to be located. However, in general, the "suitable" classification is still applicable because of dilution from the large volume and flow of the New River.

Iron and sulfate originating from coal seams and abandoned mine workings also are affecting the overall water quality (NPS 1989c). Groundwater quality varies from good to poor; groundwater is subject to contamination from untreated sewage and dissolved substances leached from aquifers.

Geology, Topography, and Soils

The New River is significant because it is the only stream that flows northwestward across the Appalachians and is believed to be the oldest river on the North American continent. The present-day New River was the main headwaters of an ancient watercourse known as the Teays River. Although millions of years have passed, the waterway still flows in its original channel.

The geology of the Middle Gorge unit consists primarily of sedimentary formations deposited during the Mississippian and Pennsylvanian periods of the Paleozoic era. The Hinton and Bluestone formations comprise the shales and siltstones found in the unit. Coal-bearing sediments are also present throughout the unit.

The topography of the Middle Gorge is characterized by deeply incised tributaries and mountainous terrain with average slopes of 50% to 60%. Depth of the gorge ranges from more than 1,400 feet at Grandview to approximately 600 feet at Thurmond. The average drop in elevation, as measured along the river, is 12 feet per mile through the unit.

New River

Existing Residential Area

Road to Terry

Abandoned Railroad Bridge

2-Year Floodplain (1,162.4')
25-Year Floodplain (1,165.0')
100-Year Floodplain (1,167.9')

Existing Railroad

Existing Vegetation
(Typical)

U.S. Highway 41

Piney Creek

McCreery Floodplain

New River Gorge National River
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



North

0 50' 100'

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Soils in the unit are moderately deep silty or sandy loams, usually well drained. The valley bottom and lower slopes are dominated by Calvin-Gilpin soils, which are moderately fertile and well suited to forest growth but have severe engineering limitations because of erosion potential. Upper slopes and ridgetops contain Rockland-Dekalb-Gilpin soils, which have similar limitations. Areas at the water edge, including Army Camp and McCreery, are composed of alluvium washed from weathered shales, siltstone, and sandstone. These areas are subject to severe flooding, and alternating drought and flooded conditions limit their use for development.

Vegetation

As elsewhere, climate, soils, and topography largely determine the types of vegetation of the Middle Gorge unit. Substantial annual precipitation (more than 43 inches), relatively mild winters (temperatures above freezing), a variety of soil types, and topographic diversity have led to an unusually varied flora; more than 1,067 plant species have been identified in the entire national river area.

Although the entire region was extensively harvested for timber, a second-growth forest has returned to the Middle Gorge. It is dominated by a great variety of hardwood trees: red and white oaks, tulip poplar, basswood, sugar maple, buckeye, and hemlock. Riparian areas at Army Camp and Grandview Sandbar contain elm, silver and red maple, and white ash. Understory trees and shrubs include dogwood, magnolia, and rhododendron.

Wildlife

In addition to containing natural habitat for wildlife (as discussed under "Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species"), New River Gorge supports a number of avian and mammalian species of special note because they are subject to management by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Wildlife

Resources Section, and may be open to public hunting. In particular these include a reintroduced wild turkey population, white-tailed deer, black bear, aquatic furbearers, and migratory waterfowl.

In addition to these terrestrial forms, a number of fish species are found in the New River and its tributaries. In a 1980 biological survey, 58 fish species were identified in the river, including game fish populations of largemouth and smallmouth bass, catfish, muskellunge, walleye, and trout. The New River is the most important smallmouth bass fishery in West Virginia. Because the tributaries in the New River basin cannot support a natural trout fishery, the state stocks adult trout in selected tributaries throughout the New River Gorge, including Dunlop Creek, which is located in the Middle Gorge unit. The program consists of put-and-take stockings of adult brook trout, rainbow trout, and some brown trout in streams that will support trout for most of the spring and summer.

Scenic Resources

The Middle Gorge unit is classified as "rustic" in the *Resource Inventory and Analysis* for the national river that was prepared by the National Park Service (NPS 1989c). The scenic characteristics of the Middle Gorge are primarily natural landforms with clusters of residential and abandoned town and industrial sites.

The main scenic attraction is the gorge itself: rugged, forested, and much recovered from earlier impacts of logging and mining. Unlike some other parts of the national river, where the course of the river is seen dramatically from the gorge rim above, the Middle Gorge offers a more intimate visual experience. Here, visitors can have a feeling of being on and near the river, of being in a hardwood forest. A tour along McKendree Road is the heart of that experience: some stretches of the road parallel the river very close to the shore or on nearby slopes; others leave the gorge to meander up tributary valleys.

Travelers along McKendree Road and WV 41 can see small towns, abandoned mine sites, and historic buildings. Although much reduced in size from earlier days, the small communities and historic resources still exhibit the architectural style and flavor of the 1800s and 1900s, so that it is not difficult to imagine earlier, busier times in these towns, these mines, even earlier trains running on the modern-day railroad.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Middle Gorge Unit Overall

The Middle Gorge unit contains a number of historic resources representing themes that have predominated throughout the development of the New River. Most notably, coal mining played a significant role in shaping the character of the area from the last quarter of the 19th century to the mid-20th century. New River "smokeless" coal became a valuable and widely marketed commodity; its clean-burning qualities satisfied far-ranging demands for heating fuel, coke for steel production, and fuel to power steam locomotives and ships. Pervasive evidence of the area's coal mining heritage are remnants of mining and processing facilities and company towns — those that survived mine closures to persist as small communities as well as abandoned sites that have been reduced to foundation remains.

Similarly, the railroad, never far from sight or earshot, provides another historical link to the last century. Today's CSX Railroad is successor to the Chesapeake and Ohio that pioneered a tortuous route along the narrow bench above the river. Completed in 1873, the C&O made it economically feasible to exploit the rich coal and timber resources of the gorge that had previously eluded serious development.

Although coal mining and the railroad were dominant historical forces throughout the New River Gorge, sites in other planning units already have been identified as offering the best opportunities for interpreting these

themes. For instance, substantial development is proposed at Thurmond and Kaymoor to illustrate the themes of railroading and mining, respectively. Resources in the Middle Gorge unit do not appear to present opportunities for intensive development or interpretation of a theme of either railroading or mining. However, sites in the Middle Gorge like Prince Brothers' Store and Quinimont illustrate themes such as private commercial enterprise and a typical residential settlement, respectively, that cannot be shown elsewhere. The Middle Gorge sites do contribute to a general understanding of the process and extent of industrialization and human activity, in this way providing a counterpoint to sites like Thurmond.

Specific Sites

Mill Creek. Little information is available about the historical or architectural significance of an abandoned farmstead near the confluence of Mill Creek and New River. Research needs to be conducted before any actions are undertaken that could affect the structure.

Quinnimont. The site of Quinnimont was settled as early as 1827 by Jacob Smith, who reportedly subsisted by hunting and fishing. In 1870, the Charter Oak and Iron Company established an iron furnace at the site, producing common pig iron. This is considered the first industry to have been started in the New River Gorge. Operations were unsuccessful and ceased after three years (some sources indicate that operations lasted into the 1880s). The deteriorated stone remains of the furnace are located near the Quinnimont rail yard.

The town of Quinnimont was established in 1873 upon organization of the Quinnimont Charter Oak Coal and Iron Company by pioneer coal operator Col. Joseph L. Beury. Beury is credited with having opened the first coal mines in the gorge of the New River at Quinnimont and having made the first coal shipment over the newly completed C&O railroad. A large stone monument erected in his honor by other coal operators stands in the town.

Quinnimont became a bustling railroad center where trains serving the mines and communities along the Laurel Creek and Piney branches of the C&O were switched to the main line. As early as 1879, annual coal output from the Quinnimont mines was placed at nearly 50,000 tons. Coke production at that time was nearly 27,000 tons, with 100 coke ovens reportedly in operation in 1880. Several lumber and sawmill operations also were underway.

By 1910 the town's population had grown to 400 with a union supply store, ice, bottling and meat companies, and other businesses. A 35-room hotel with steam heat and electric lights was built, but it was destroyed by fire in 1914. The town developed in a segmented fashion, with most of the population between the railroad branch line and Laurel Creek and the rest next to the highway above the C&O main line, where commercial establishments also were located.

Railroad facilities at Quinnimont were a round-house where engines were repaired, a freight and passenger station, a yard office/signal tower, and a switching yard. The yard office, dismantled in 1981, was the last significant example of the town's late Victorian railroad architecture. Most of the town's population left in the 1950s after the mines and lumber operations closed. Quinnimont today consists of a large train yard, two churches (which served the town's black and white residents), a gas station, an abandoned school, and a few houses.

The National Park Service has acquired several historic structures, along with associated garages and outbuildings. Among those structures are the Ashley/Plumley house and other houses known by names of former occupants: the Opal Kessler, Judy Bowles, Thomas Bowles, Robert Bowles, and Willis houses. There is also the Quinnimont Missionary Baptist church, which remains in active use. Two federally owned structures, including the Ashley/Plumley House, which was characteristic of the better quality architecture of the gorge in the late 19th century, have recently been destroyed by fires caused by vandals.

Grandview Sandbar. No cultural resources have been identified at Grandview Sandbar.

Prince Brothers' Store. The small town of Prince was named for William Prince, a former Confederate soldier. With his brother, James F. Prince, William bought 300 acres surrounding the present townsite in 1870. (One source indicates 400 acres were purchased in 1873). The brothers, who later amassed considerable wealth through investments in land, banking, and coal company assets, shrewdly anticipated the business advantages of locating at this particular spot along the route of the not-yet-completed Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. They built a store and a home and sold a right-of-way to the C&O, with the stipulation that the location remain a regular train stop. However, the town of Prince was begun by owners of the Royal Coal and Coke Company, who operated a mine across the river from Prince at Royal.

After the railroad was completed, the strategic location of the community as a regional shipping center was widely recognized, and the C&O established a station there in 1880. William Prince was appointed station agent and later, in 1889, opened a 32-room hotel to accommodate the large numbers of wagoners who arrived from outlying areas to load and transfer goods and merchandise. A ferry was also put into service to transport wagons across the river. It operated until it was rendered obsolete by a railroad bridge constructed in 1899 to serve the Piney (Creek) branch line of the C&O.

A post office was established at Prince in 1889, and James Prince was named postmaster. He held the position until his death in 1922, at which time duties were transferred to his nephew (William's son), also named James F. Prince. The post office originally was in a building adjacent to the present Prince Brother's Store; later it was moved into the store, where it remained active until the mid-1980s.

William Prince operated his store until 1893, transferring the business at that time to his

sons, James and Frank Prince. The brothers continued operations until 1937. Subsequent owners and lessees retained use of the store for general merchandise and groceries until operations were finally ceased in 1984. It was acquired by the National Park Service in 1985.

A firm construction date for the Prince Brother's Store is not known, although it is estimated at sometime around 1900. Before that, the store may have operated from other locations in the vicinity. The present structure was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. It is considered locally significant as the last surviving commercial building of its type along the New River. The store was unique in never having been a company store in the common traditional sense of coal mining towns in the New River Gorge. Its association with the regionally prominent Prince family was cited as lending further justification for eligibility.

The store is a two-story frame structure typical of West Virginia's late Victorian rural "boomtown" architecture. Distinctive architectural features include the large plate glass windows of the facade's three bays, a bracketed mid-level cornice along the facade, the cornice detailing, and the overhanging eaves of the roof line. The structure retains a good deal of its original fabric in a relatively unaltered condition, although it has experienced structural damage in the rear from a collapsing retaining wall and faces overall deterioration from weathering. A distinctive stone and wrought-iron fence extends east of the store adjacent to the highway in front of the former Prince homesite, which is also federal property.

The Prince Brothers' Store is the last significant turn-of-the-century building in the community. An adjoining store building on the west was removed; its site is now a parking lot. The old hotel also has been razed, as has the Prince home, which was behind and east of the store. A significant example of early C&O railroad architecture was lost recently with the demolition of the Prince signal tower. A passenger station constructed in 1946 continues to operate at Prince under the authority

of Amtrak. Built at a cost of nearly \$100,000 to handle the increasing demand for passenger service, the station was at the time considered the finest along the C&O line between Richmond and Huntington.

Royal. The abandoned coal mining community of Royal is across the river from Prince. In 1891, the Royal Coal and Coke Company, under the ownership of James Kay and James Laing, opened a mine in the Fire Creek seam near the site. It was reportedly the first coal mining operation in Raleigh County, and for many years production was placed at 600 tons a day. Prior to 1899, when the railroad bridge was constructed across the river to serve the Piney branch, the company loaded coal into half-ton buckets and delivered it over an aerial tramway across the river to C&O coal cars at Prince. Today the site contains only concrete foundation remains overgrown with secondary vegetation.

McCreery. The small community of McCreery was named for J.T. McCreery, who in the 1880s transported cargo on a flatboat, or *bateau*, along the stretch of river between Piney Creek and Prince. Before the C&O railroad was completed, bateaux were an important means of transporting lumber and other provisions down stretches of the river, and they evidently continued to serve a valuable function until the railroad built bridges and branch lines to reach locations on the opposite (left, or west) riverbank. The site of McCreery was a strategic unloading point for river traffic because of the rapids directly downstream, which could capsize boats and cargo. Freight was moved out of the gorge at this point by horse and ox teams over a difficult route up Badoff Mountain (originally called Bateaux Mountain). No historical remains dating to this early phase of river traffic exist at McCreery. The site now consists of a recently vacated modern (1950s–1960s) store and residences.

Terry Beach. As a relatively modern development of private seasonal and year-round homes, Terry Beach has no cultural resources of historic significance.

Army Camp. Army Camp, sometimes known as Camp Prince, is located on the Stretcher Neck bend of the river. It was used by the U.S. Army during World War II to train soldiers in the use of rafts and the construction of pontoon bridges for fording heavy equipment. Remnants of concrete pads and footings remain at the site from that period.

Terry. Terry was a coal mining community that developed in two levels on the Raleigh County (west) side of the Stretcher Neck bend of the New River; one level along the old lower road and the other higher up the side of the gorge, on a wide bench. Mining was conducted at the Terry no. 1 and no. 2 mines in the early 20th century, and some mining occurred as late as 1967. A sawmill was another important local industry. By the 1920s, the town comprised about 60 houses, a boarding house, a Baptist church, a school, and a large building that housed the company store, a post office, and the coal company office. Today Terry consists of several recreation camps and deteriorated miners' houses, all privately owned.

McKendree Hospital Site and McKendree Road. The small community of McKendree originated before 1880; census records for that year indicate that lumbering was the principal occupation. At that time, the area's rapidly developing coal mining industry increased the lumber trade, with demand for mine support timbers and building materials for construction of tipples and other facilities.

In February 1899, the West Virginia legislature passed an act that provided for establishment of three hospitals in the state's coal mining regions. "Miners' Hospital no. 2" was authorized at McKendree to serve as the primary emergency care facility in the New River Gorge. Although it was designated a miners' hospital, preferential admission was given to individuals who had suffered any job-related injury, and treatment was provided free of charge.

The hospital, an imposing 3-story red brick and stone structure, was opened in 1901 on

6½ acres of land donated by Col. Joseph L. Beury, an early New River coal entrepreneur. The hospital site, a relatively level bench about 100 feet above the river, was considered ideal for the healthful recovery of patients, being ". . . far removed from the smoke and filth of the mines and railroads, and from any disturbing saloon influences . . ." (West Virginia, State Board of Control 1910: 119). In 1910 the hospital expanded its activities to include a school for nurses. At that time it had a capacity of 42 beds, which was thought inadequate to handle the increasing patient load.

The site, which eventually encompassed more than 120 acres, contained additional facilities, including a boarding house, superintendent's and nurses' living quarters (built in 1916), and other outbuildings. The grounds were carefully landscaped with terraced lawns and gardens. Still at the site are remnants of original rock walls, skillfully built by Italian stone masons.

During the early years of the hospital's operation, patients arrived by way of the C&O Railroad. The McKendree Road was completed between Thurmond and Prince in the 1920s to provide access to the hospital, although a cindered road reportedly led to the site before 1906. The narrow, winding McKendree Road was laboriously cut into the steep side of the gorge by pick and shovel, often passing directly above the C&O tracks. Mules and carts were used to haul materials.

In 1941, the hospital was discontinued and converted into a home for aged black citizens. That institution was closed in 1956 and the residents were moved to Huntington. After being abandoned, the hospital buildings were scavenged and vandalized; they were razed in 1969. The site now contains remnants of concrete outbuildings, rock walls, and terraced building sites increasingly overgrown by dense vegetation.

Thayer. The coal mining community of Thayer was founded shortly after 1900 by the Ephraim Creek Coal and Coke Company. The company operated the Buffalo and Slater

Mines, which were acquired in 1926 by the New River Coal Company. The "clean, well-ordered" town was arranged with houses and company buildings aligned on either side of two streets separated by the C&O tracks. Other houses were scattered upslope. Approximately 20 well-constructed two-story houses were built; some remaining examples exhibit distinctive "L-shaped" floor plans. Smaller, less substantial housing was situated at the top of the mountain near the mines.

Thayer eventually boasted a Methodist Episcopal church, a company store, three schools (two for white students and one for black students), a depot, a theater/amusement hall, and other businesses and services. The population was estimated at 500 in 1923, down from reports of as many as a 1,000 in 1910. Several permanent residences and summer homes remain in the community, which has a year-round population of fewer than 30. The only federally owned structure in Thayer is the simple white frame church next to McKendree Road, presumed to be the former Methodist Episcopal church. The townsite contains several privately owned examples of distinctive residential architecture characteristic of early mining communities in the gorge.

Campsites for Boater Use. No cultural resources have been identified along the river at locations (such as Silo Rapids) that boaters sometimes use for day or overnight activities.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

As a whole, population is gradually declining in communities inside the national river boundary in Middle Gorge. There are few public services and very little commercial base within the small communities that continue their private existence in the Middle Gorge — Thayer, Terry, Quinnimont, Prince, and Terry Beach. Many permanent residents are retired, others of working age depend entirely on outside employment. A few households have no working members and are dependent on public assistance programs.

Many homes in these communities are used only on weekends or during vacations by families with a permanent residence outside the area. Children must attend schools outside the community. A few small general stores offer limited merchandise, but for the most part the permanent residents shop in nearby larger towns like Beckley and Oak Hill.

Timbering and coal production, the historically dominant economic forces, have been drastically reduced throughout the region and specifically in and around the Middle Gorge unit. To a certain extent they have been replaced with alternate forces, including light manufacturing, tourism, and the residential/commercial development related to development of interstate highways and retirement communities.

Tourism, and in particular whitewater river rafting, plays a significant role seasonally, but profits and benefits of this industry are fairly well confined to owners, river guides, and drivers, many of whom are transient employees attracted from other areas. Most whitewater rafting companies are located outside the immediate area of Middle Gorge because the prime rafting areas are downstream. Recreational kayakers and canoeists (as distinct from fishermen) tend to be relatively young, are from recently arrived families, or come from some distance away.

Fishing and, to a lesser extent, hunting are recreational interests of many local residents, including those living within the boundaries of the national river. These activities also attract visitors to the area, with some local economic benefits from tackle and bait purchase, boat rental, and overnight accommodations. However, many anglers, especially those who come from nearby, either do not stay overnight or simply camp in one of the informal areas along the river such as Army Camp or Grandview Sandbar, so the local economic effect is small.

The surrounding larger communities are middle- to working-class in character. Extensive lands are still in agricultural use, yet many areas previously cleared for timbering or farm-

ing have reverted to heavy secondary forest growth.

VISITOR USE

Background

Visitor statistics specifically referring to the Middle Gorge are not available. Table 1 contains selected figures for New River Gorge National River as a whole for 1984 through 1991. A substantial increase in total recreation visits in 1991 reflects the opening of a major new visitor center at Canyon Rim and the inclusion of visitation at Grandview for the first time. For river use (primarily rafting), it should be noted that there was virtually no use before the mid 1970s; after that, commercial use in particular expanded explosively to the 60,000–80,000 range of the late 1980s.

Traditional past and current use of the Middle Gorge by recreational visitors can be roughly divided into two groups: (a) whitewater river rafting, kayaking, and canoeing and (b) shore-based camping, picnicking, and fishing from the bank and from small boats. To date, few recreational visitors have been noted on foot or by vehicle simply exploring or photographing the historical and natural features along McKendree Road or in the small communities nearby.

Whitewater Activities

The whitewater user group is divided between commercially operated trips (primarily in inflatable 6–10 passenger rafts and some single seat rubber inflatables called "duckies"), private kayakers, and a few canoeists. The white water of the middle section of the river offers a few class III opportunities (on a scale of I to VI, where class I is quiet, undisturbed water and class VI is impassably rough) separated by lesser rapids and a number of quiet water stretches. There is considerable seasonal variation in difficulty ratings as water levels, speed, and volume fluctuate. Overall, the river here is considerably calmer than it is from Thurmond downriver to Fayette Station, or the even rougher Gauley River to the north, both of which are heavily used by local commercial operators and private river-runners.

The intermediate character of the Middle Gorge's white water has led to its increasing use by commercial operators as a beginner's or family-oriented one-day trip. Similarly, it is appropriate for beginning to intermediate kayakers, and privately sponsored training trips for groups are popular. Experienced canoeists can run the Middle Gorge at appropriate water levels. The most common route for all these users is a morning put-in at McCreery and late afternoon takeout at various points near Thurmond. Low water levels can extend the time

TABLE 1: VISITOR USE STATISTICS

| Year | Recreation | River Use | | Overnight | Trail Use | |
|------------------------|------------|------------|---------|-----------|------------|--------|
| | Visits | Commercial | Private | Stays | Wolf Creek | Minden |
| 1984 | N/A | 82,062 | 8,348 | * | — | — |
| 1985 | 263,000 | 85,316 | 10,066 | * | — | — |
| 1986 | 394,000 | 72,631 | 4,239 | 2,473 | — | — |
| 1987 | 436,000 | 72,089 | 10,533 | 3,403 | — | — |
| 1988 | 400,800 | 48,874 | 4,704 | 3,101 | 7,169 | 10,653 |
| 1989 | 412,000 | 66,385 | 6,718 | 1,642 | 15,748 | 17,529 |
| 1990 | 379,000 | 51,149 | 16,026 | 2,221 | 3,140 | 7,465 |
| 1991 | 774,000 | 64,077 | 6,021 | 1,247 | * | 7,770 |
| 1992 | 940,300 | 91,543 | 5,874 | 4,484 | * | 6,734 |
| 1993 (through July) | 587,922 | 54,539 | 4,567 | 2,271 | * | * |

* Not available.

for this trip considerably, requiring a takeout at Thayer. A few rafters plan to stay overnight in this section either at one of several informal campsites (Silo Rapids is favored) or by special arrangement at a private house several miles below Terry.

The statistics for commercial and private river use (table 1) refer to totals for all sections of the river. Variations in some years (1988, for example) are explained by extended drought conditions, which often left water levels, controlled by dam releases upstream, too low for successful commercial trip offerings. High rainfall years generally provide more opportunities. The notable increase in 1992 reflects an increase in state permits to commercial operators as well as a more direct count of activity by park staff. These variations make it difficult to identify a trend, but commercial operators confirm that their businesses have expanded over this period, and it is largely due to commercial operator requests that the state has increased the number of permits.

However, noting that the tremendous annual growth of the 1970s probably has passed, operators think the market is becoming saturated on the traditional stretches on which they offer trips, such as Thurmond to Fayette Station and the Gauley. These sections of high use are not shown separately in table 1, but in comparison with those areas, commercial activity in the Middle Gorge as a whole is relatively small.

Operators indicate dramatic increases in business over the past five years, however. Some report that business on the Middle Gorge doubled annually over several recent years. As capacity limitations and market saturation on popular stretches of the river have become an issue, expansion to less popular segments like the middle section has begun. The explanation offered is that operators want to broaden their market to the less adventurous and family segments. Another factor is that with the rapidly increasing number of commercial operators in the business, competition is forcing them to look for additional markets to stay economically viable.

Private kayaker organizations report that they have not seen large increases in their use of the Middle Gorge in the recent past, but it is difficult to judge private use since some kayakers are not associated with organizations and may come from outside the area.

Camping, Fishing, and Hunting

The National Park Service does not operate any formal campgrounds in the Middle Gorge, but two areas, Grandview Sandbar and Army Camp, traditionally have been used by local and regional residents for a variety of activities, including overnight camping in informal sites where vehicles are pulled into clear spaces near the shore. This kind of camping occurs mostly in July and August. Shore fishing and relaxing are the typical activities of campers here. Picnicking, launching of small fishing boats ("johnboats") and occasionally drinking and music-playing parties are additional activities.

These areas are seldom used as put-in or takeout points for rafters because the McCreery site is more conveniently located and because current road conditions into Grandview Sandbar and Army Camp make trailer traffic difficult. Occasional conflicts between users have been reported in these areas, usually between family-oriented campers or picnickers and party crowds. The only facilities provided by the park staff are portable toilets and trash pickup. Occasional ranger patrols are made during the season of heaviest use.

Users of the two areas seem to be primarily residents of nearby communities or, if from farther away, former residents who developed a habit of using the areas before establishment of the national river. Very little use of these informal camping areas by distant travelers ("national" visitors) has been reported. The camping areas are not publicized in park brochures or other information available from the National Park Service.

Grandview Sandbar, in particular, is used by knowledgeable local fishermen for launching

of johnboats or dories because the stretch immediately downstream to McCreery is quiet water and known for good fishing. Experienced dory operators can navigate the Middle Gorge as far down as Thurmond. Some commercial operators offer fishing and hunting trips by dory, but aluminum motor-powered johnboats seldom chance the passage.

Shore fishermen reach the river at Grandview Sandbar and Army Camp, as well as at several other points accessible either from WV 41 or McKendree Road. Some access points are the abandoned townsite of Royal, Mill Creek, Prince, Quinnimont, Thayer, or elsewhere that McKendree Road is close to the river shore. McKendree Road is poorly maintained, especially from Thayer southward to Prince, and under wet conditions four-wheel drive is sometimes necessary. Anglers with high clearance or 4WD vehicles sometimes travel southward from Stone Cliff to Silo Rapids or northward from Terry for several miles on rough tracks on river left. Private ownership and maintenance of those tracks mean that their availability to the public is inconsistent.

Hunting of certain species of wildlife, including turkey, white-tailed deer, and some waterfowl, is permitted within New River Gorge National River. The state of West Virginia is responsible for management of these species and regulation of hunting. In particular, the spring (only) hunt for turkey within the Middle Gorge has become more popular as the size and health of the Middle Gorge turkey population have improved.

Anticipated Future Use

According to representatives of commercial rafting operators, it is highly likely that future whitewater use along this part of the gorge will continue to increase for reasons discussed in the previous section. The focus on McCreery-to-Thurmond day trips may broaden to include launching at Mill Creek or even at Meadow Creek, with overnight camping stops before takeout at Thurmond. Use by private rafters and kayakers may not increase substantially,

but this projection could be altered if facilities such as additional access points or overnight accommodations along the river were added, or if the area's suitability for those uses was more broadly publicized.

Increases in camping and fishing in Middle Gorge have not been as abrupt as those in commercial rafting. Two alternate prospects for the future seem likely: if only minor improvements were made in areas now used for informal camping and fishing access, and if publicity in official park publications and information continued to be low-key, most users, as at present, probably would be knowledgeable local residents continuing traditional patterns. Total use probably would increase only gradually.

However, if there were significant improvements in camping area access roads and in McKendree Road, and if those areas were identified as worthwhile destinations in the park brochure and at visitor contact points, substantial numbers of visitors from more distant locations would be likely to come to the Middle Gorge. This seems even more likely given the sharp increases in visitor contacts at the new Canyon Rim visitor center and at Grandview, where both local and national visitors stop for help in planning their visits to the area. Of even greater significance may be the planned extensive historic restoration of Thurmond, which will draw many visitors to this part of the gorge and potentially direct them southward along McKendree Road as a scenic alternative route back to the major highway system.

Hunting for turkey and, to a lesser degree, deer is likely to continue to be popular, mostly among local or state residents who already are familiar with this opportunity. Expansion in turkey hunting will be related to the size of the huntable population of birds and the extent to which the state may choose to expand allowed hunting. As with all state-managed hunting that may be permitted in national park areas, the superintendent of New River Gorge does have the authority, in consultation with the state, to modify or even prohibit such

activity at certain times or locations for reasons of public safety or resource protection.

Interest in hiking and mountain biking is also increasing. More than 6,000 hikers a year are already reported along the recently opened Thurmond-to-Minden Trail. There are a number of other trails now open or being planned in other units of the national river, and it can be anticipated that trails eventually will be considered in the Middle Gorge if there is adequate public land. The gentle grades and generally good surface of McKendree Road are attractive to cyclists with wide-tired moun-

tain bikes, and it is possible that this popular activity will become established soon.

The number of visitors entering the Middle Gorge unit may be radically affected by improvements in the maintenance of McKendree Road. Those improvements will make the road consistently passable to two-wheel-drive traffic, even as a gravel surfaced, low-speed road. The amount of increase will be directly related to the extent improvements are publicized, identified, interpreted, and signed by official park publications and information.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In the previous draft document (NPS 1993), a number of alternatives were considered before selection of the final development concept plan. Those alternatives provided a spectrum from "no action" (continuation of present management) through an emphasis on recreation on the river to a focus on recreation and interpretation on land. The previous alternative D, which contained elements of the other alternatives and was intended to balance various uses, has been slightly modified and selected as the final plan.

The alternatives that were considered, but not selected, are briefly described below.

Alternative A, present management (no action), would have involved continuation of present management and activities as if no comprehensive plan had been adopted. Active management or protection of resources already underway would have continued under normal policy guidance for an NPS area. Threats to resources at a site would have been dealt with on a reactive basis, and since there would not have been long-term objectives for each site, only short-term decisions would have been made. Minimum legal requirements such as safety matters and protection of federally owned historic structures would have been fulfilled.

Alternative B, emphasis on recreation on the river, would have focused on serving traditional on-river recreational visitors such as clients of commercial whitewater boating operations, private whitewater kayakers or canoeists, boat-based anglers, and campers boating to riverside campsites. Land activities such as vehicle-based camping, sightseeing, shore fishing, and exploration of historic resources would have continued informally and without additional physical development.

Alternative C, emphasis on activities on river shore and surrounding lands, would

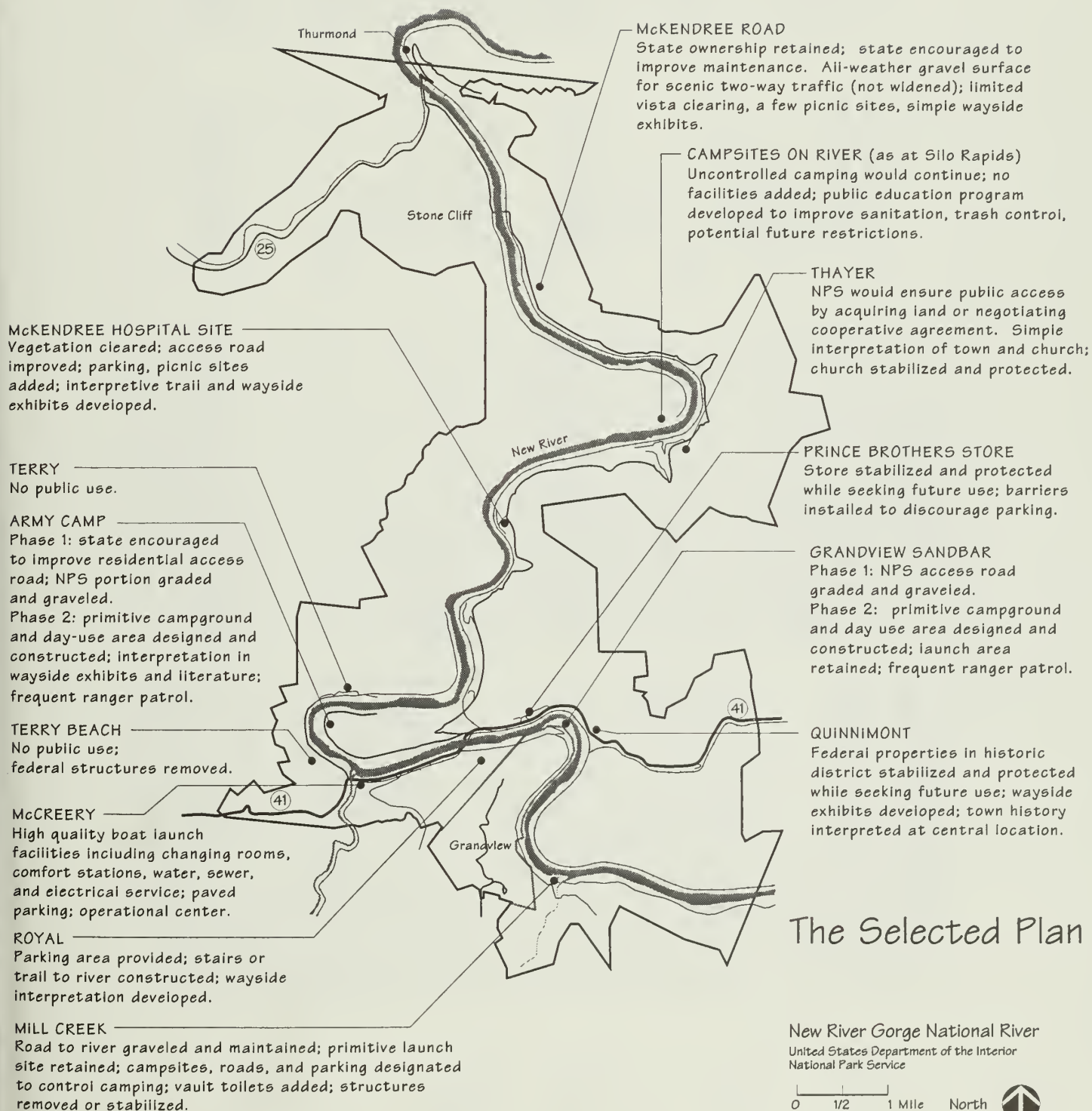
have entailed emphasis on traditional vehicle-based camping areas, shore fishing opportunities, and preservation and appreciation of natural scenic and cultural resources on the surrounding land, rather than on activities on the river. Only minor improvements would have been made in river access for white-water activities and boat-based anglers.

OVERVIEW OF PLAN

The Middle Gorge plan proposes management and development balanced between traditional on-river recreation and a variety of land-based activities. Some activities, such as commercial whitewater rafting, individual kayaking and rafting, or vehicle-based primitive camping and fishing, already are common and attract knowledgeable special-interest visitors; others, like sightseeing, picnicking, and exploration of cultural resources along the river's edge or in local communities, are not yet common but are considered appropriate to the long-range objectives of the Middle Gorge. Such activities should broaden the appeal of the area to local residents as well as visitors from farther away.

The plan, which is described in detail later in this chapter, is summarized on the Selected Plan map. The proposed development and use at various locations are presented in table 2, which also briefly lists anticipated environmental consequences and estimated costs.

Focusing on the details of development at individual locations does not relieve the National Park Service of its fundamental obligations to study, evaluate, preserve, and protect the resources of New River Gorge National River and to provide for a degree of public use that will not compromise the preservation objective. Thus, basic required protection of vegetation, wildlife, and scenic and historic resources will continue, as will maintenance of federal structures and roads or trails and enforcement of federal or special park regulations now in force.



The Selected Plan

New River Gorge National River
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service


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TABLE 2: ACTIONS, CONSEQUENCES, AND COSTS OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

| Site | Proposed Development (Balanced Land and River Activities) | Anticipated Environmental Consequences | Estimated Costs |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Middle Gorge unit overall | Provision of a variety of small-scale developments for activities on both river and land; low-key interpretation. | Natural: Improved erosion control and reduced disturbance of riparian habitat; some short-term effects from construction. Cultural: Impacts reduced by preconstruction surveys; some structures might be removed and their direct value lost. | All sites, totals^a Gross construction \$2,434,000 Advance planning 463,650 Plan grand total \$2,897,650 Interpretive costs 216,300 Recurring costs 127,000 |
| Mill Creek | Access road graveled and maintained; launch site retained as is; campsites and spur roads designated to control camping; vault toilets added; day user parking defined; structures removed or stabilized according to local needs. | Natural: Improved erosion control; reduced disturbance of riparian habitat. Cultural: Only indirect value would remain if old farm structure removed. | Gross construction \$ 85,150 Advance planning 16,250 Total \$101,400 |
| Quinnimont | Federal properties in potential historic district stabilized, maintained, and protected; fire and burglar alarms installed; wayside exhibits added; town history interpreted at a central location. | Natural: No additional impacts. Cultural: Indefinite protection through stabilization; potential for vandalism and fire partially mitigated by alarm systems. | Gross construction \$376,000 Advance planning 72,000 Total \$448,000 |
| Grandview Sandbar | Phase I: NPS will grade and gravel access road. Phase II: day and night users separated through designation of sites for primitive camping; addition of toilets, picnic tables; parking designated, spur roads defined; primitive launch area retained; frequent ranger patrols; literature provided on rules and camp etiquette; no interpretation. | Natural: Improved erosion control; reduced disturbance of riparian habitat. Cultural: No adverse effects expected; survey required. | Gross construction Phase I \$ 65,550 Phase II 98,250 Advance planning Phase I 12,500 Phase II 18,750 Total \$195,050 |
| Prince Brothers' Store | No public use proposed; store stabilized, maintained, protected as part of historic scene and held for future use; barriers placed around parking area to prevent unsafe parking, discourage vandalism; fire and burglar alarms installed. | Natural: No additional impacts. Cultural: Indefinite protection through stabilization; potential for vandalism and fire partially mitigated by alarm systems. | Gross construction \$114,000 Advance planning 21,800 Total \$135,800 |

| Site | Proposed Development (Balanced Land and River Activities) | Anticipated Environmental Consequences | Estimated Costs |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Royal | Addition of identifying sign, a few parking spaces, stairs, improved trail to river; old townsite interpreted in wayside exhibits. | Natural: Improved erosion control. Cultural: Potential for disturbance of ruins with increased use. | Gross construction \$13,100 Advance planning 2,500 Total \$15,600 |
| McCreery | High-quality launch area developed for commercial, private boaters; launch ramp stabilized; comfort station, changing room with utilities added; better traffic pattern, paved parking, curbs; small operations and maintenance center developed for Middle Gorge. | Natural: Some development in floodplain; improved erosion control; disturbance of 3½ acres previously disturbed; possible adverse effects on wetlands. Cultural: No adverse effects expected; survey required. | Gross construction \$1,340,100 Advance planning 254,600 Total \$1,594,700 |
| Terry Beach | No public use; federal buildings removed. | Natural: No additional impacts. Cultural: No adverse effects expected; survey required. | Gross construction \$26,200 Advance planning 5,000 Total \$31,200 |
| Army Camp | Phase I: NPS will work with state to improve residential access road and will grade and gravel federal part. Phase II: Day and night users separated through designation of primitive campsites, addition of toilets, picnic tables; parking designated; spur roads defined; frequent ranger patrols; history told in wayside exhibits; literature provided on rules, camp etiquette. | Natural: Improved erosion control, reduced disturbance of riparian habitat, but potential effects on rare plant; potential for hazardous waste. Cultural: Survey required since existence of undocumented resources is possible. | Gross construction Phase I \$131,000 Phase II 72,050 Advance planning Phase I 25,000 Phase II 13,750 Total \$241,800 |
| Terry | Privately owned; no public services or access proposed. | Natural: No additional impacts. Cultural: No additional impacts. | — |
| McKendree Hospital Site | Vegetation cleared; access road drainage improved but gravel surface retained; parking areas, picnic sites added; sign installed to mark site; trail and interpretive wayside exhibits developed. | Natural: Erosion control improved; 1 acre vegetation disturbance; possible endangered plant, wetland may be present. Cultural: No adverse effects expected; survey required; concern for vandalism with increased use. | Gross construction \$43,000 Advance planning 8,200 Total \$51,200 |

| Site | Proposed Development (Balanced Land and River Activities) | Anticipated Environmental Consequences | Estimated Costs |
|--|---|---|--|
| Thayer | NPS will ensure public river access through acquisition of site or cooperative agreement; church with potential historical significance stabilized, fire and burglar alarms installed; simple wayside interpretation provided. | Natural: No additional impacts. Cultural: Structure protected indefinitely; potential for vandalism and fire partially mitigated by alarm systems. | Gross construction \$46,000 Advance planning 8,800 Total \$54,800 |
| Campsites for Boater Use (as at Silo Rapids) | Uncontrolled camping will continue, no facilities added; public education program developed to improve sanitation; Silo Rapids road abandoned if it becomes federal property. | Natural: Improved control of trash, human waste; no further clearing of riparian habitat. Cultural: No additional impacts. | — |
| McKendree Road | State ownership continued, NPS will work with state to improve shoulders, drainage; all-weather gravel surface for scenic two-way route without widening; limited vista clearing, a few picnic sites and simple wayside exhibits. | Natural: Better erosion control with improved shoulders and pavement; short-term pollution by fresh asphalt; some roadside vegetation lost through shoulder work and vista clearing. Cultural: No adverse effects expected; survey required. | Gross construction \$23,600 Advance planning 4,500 Total \$28,100 |

- a. Cost estimates should be considered only as preliminary figures. "Gross construction" includes provision for construction supervision and contingencies. "Advance planning" refers to more precise comprehensive design and cost estimating for structures, roads, or other facilities. "Interpretive cost" is the sum of estimated capital or other one-time costs discussed in the "Interpretive Prospectus" chapter. This sum should be added to capital costs of other construction for the most comprehensive estimate. "Recurring operational cost" is an estimate of operational funding (annual salaries of additional personnel, support, and routine maintenance) above the park's current operational budget.

Visitor access to resources along the river will continue to be allowed so long as regulations are obeyed and resources are not degraded. The rights of private property owners within the park's authorized boundaries will continue unchanged. The activities of commercial operations such as whitewater enterprises in the park will continue under applicable state and federal regulation and supervision. Acquisition of additional private lands will continue under policies and priorities already established for the national river as a whole.

SITE-BY-SITE DESCRIPTION OF PLAN

For a complete description of the interpretive developments proposed at these sites, see the later chapter, "Interpretive Prospectus."

Because several cultural resource properties in the Middle Gorge have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places or appear to be eligible for listing, their treatment in the plan requires special concern. For a discussion of how the National Park Service approaches such properties, see appendix A. The discussion also contains more detailed information about each of the historic properties in the Middle Gorge. This information may facilitate understanding of the reasons that a certain proposal has been selected.

Mill Creek. At Mill Creek, the access road from the Royal (Glade Creek) road will be graveled and maintained to the river's edge, where the present primitive launch site will be retained. Campsites and spur roads will be designated to control informal camping. Parking for day users will be better defined, and vault toilets will be installed. A sign program and emergency procedures relating to flood hazard similar to that proposed for Grandview Sandbar will be established for Mill Creek. The existing federally owned structures, if confirmed not to be eligible for the national register, may be kept or removed depending on the park's local needs.

Quinnimont. The federally owned structures at Quinnimont that are ultimately listed on the

National Register of Historic Places as part of a historic district will be stabilized, maintained, and protected to diminish the likelihood of degradation. Simple fire detection and burglar alarms will be installed to decrease susceptibility to vandalism. No immediate public use is proposed, but the buildings will be held for possible future use. Feasible suggestions will be solicited from local groups, with the objective of considering some rehabilitation of interior spaces while the exteriors are maintained as part of the historic scene of this old community. Structures found not eligible for the national register, and for which there is no other use, will be dismantled and removed. Simple interpretive exhibits will be installed at each structure, and the history and significance of the town will be interpreted at some central location.

Grandview Sandbar. The objective at Grandview Sandbar is to allow traditional recreational uses to continue — simple overnight camping without utilities, daytime picnicking, bank fishing, and private boat launching — but to separate day and night users, provide picnic tables, designate parking spaces, and define spur roads and campsites. Sanitation must be improved with the installation of pumpable vault toilets, but no water, sewer, or electricity will be furnished. Information on regulations and campground etiquette will be provided. Frequent ranger patrols will be arranged for seasons of heavy use.

In phase I, the Park Service will grade and gravel the access road from Royal road to Grandview Sandbar. This will provide easier access for continuation of the current use of the area for informal camping and day use. Phase 2, as funds become available, will involve development of a day-use area and primitive campground. There is no intention to develop a formal fee-collection campground serving all types of vehicles and providing extensive services. Since some of this primitive campground lies within the 100-year floodplain, there is an element of risk involved for people who choose to use these facilities. Signs will be installed indicating the floodplain and urging caution under certain conditions,

and the Park Service will have in place an evacuation or emergency procedure that outlines all reasonable efforts that will be taken to notify campers of potential flood emergencies.

Prince Brothers' Store. The Prince Brothers' store will be stabilized, maintained, and protected as part of the historic scene. It will not be immediately available for any public use, but the National Park Service will seek feasible suggestions for its future use from local groups and the general public. This might include rehabilitation of interior spaces by the Park Service, a local business, or a nonprofit agency, while the exterior is maintained to preserve its historic character as part of the cultural landscape. In the interim, because of potential safety considerations, additional barriers will be placed around the current informal parking area to discourage parking and encourage visitors simply to drive by the structure. Vandalism and potential fire damage will be addressed by addition of simple burglar and fire detection alarms.

Royal. The National Park Service will prepare a sign to identify the Royal area, and parking spaces for two or three vehicles will be provided along the roadside. Stairways and trails will replace the current steep unimproved tracks to the river's edge. The old community of Royal will be interpreted in wayside exhibits.

McCreery. A high-quality launch facility will be developed at McCreery for commercial and private boaters (see map: McCreery Launch Site, proposed development). Development will include a redesigned traffic pattern to facilitate entry of large vehicles and dropoff of boaters and equipment, a stabilized launch ramp, paved parking and driving surfaces with curbs, a changing room, a telephone, and comfort facilities served by running water, electricity, and a septic system. Private and commercial boaters will share this facility.

The National Park Service will continue to work with federal, state and local authorities to improve water quality in Piney Creek.

The McCreery location also is appropriate for development of a park operations and storage facility, which will serve growing visitor protection and maintenance needs of the Middle Gorge and Glade Creek developed areas. Specific functions are to provide shelter for river patrol boats, trailers, and vehicles, as well as office space for future seasonal ranger activities and space for small-scale maintenance storage and activity. Construction of a new facility (approximately 2,000 square feet), separated from the new launch area, is preferred over conversion of any existing federal structure in the area.

All federally owned nonhistoric structures on the south side of the highway and along Piney Creek will ultimately be removed and the sites revegetated to stabilize soils and provide screening for the proposed operations center, whose specific location on the south side of the highway will be determined later. Features of development proposed at McCreery are shown on the McCreery Launch Site, Proposed Development map.

Terry Beach. No public use of Terry Beach is proposed. The two federally owned modern structures (formerly summer residences) will be removed.

Army Camp. As at Grandview Sandbar, the objective for Army Camp is to allow traditional recreational uses to continue — simple overnight camping without utilities, daytime picnicking, bank fishing, and occasional private boat launching — but to separate day and night users, provide picnic tables, designate parking spaces, and define campsites and spur roads. Pumpable vault toilets will be installed, but no water, sewer, or electricity will be supplied. This will be done in phases, with improving the access road having first priority. As funds become available, a primitive campground will be developed.

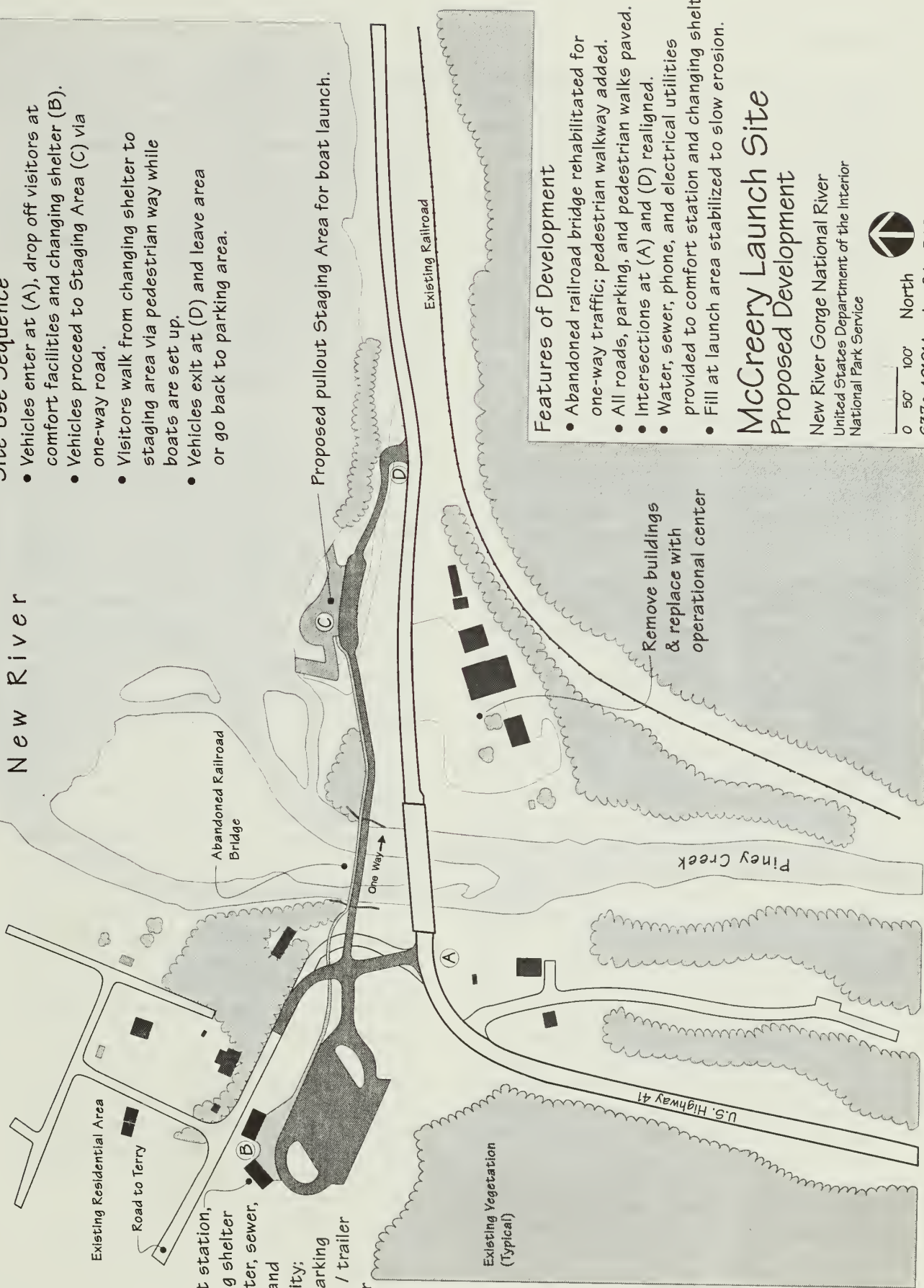
The National Park Service will work with the state to improve the existing road through the private residential area to Army Camp to re-

New River

Site Use Sequence

- Vehicles enter at (A), drop off visitors at comfort facilities and changing shelter (B).
- Vehicles proceed to Staging Area (C) via one-way road.
- Visitors walk from changing shelter to staging area via pedestrian way while boats are set up.
- Vehicles exit at (D) and leave area or go back to parking area.

Comfort station, changing shelter with water, sewer, phone, and electricity; paved parking - 12 car / trailer - 20 car



Features of Development

- Abandoned railroad bridge rehabilitated for one-way traffic; pedestrian walkway added.
- All roads, parking, and pedestrian walks paved.
- Intersections at (A) and (D) realigned.
- Water, sewer, phone, and electrical utilities provided to comfort station and changing shelter.
- Fill at launch area stabilized to slow erosion.

McCreery Launch Site Proposed Development

New River Gorge National River
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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duce dust and congestion and to resolve other issues related to pass-through traffic. The Park Service will continue to grade and gravel the federal portion of the access road. Information on campground etiquette and regulations will be provided for visitors. Frequent ranger patrols will be arranged for seasons of heavy use. The natural and cultural history of Army Camp will be interpreted through wayside exhibits. There is no intention to develop a formal fee-collection campground serving all types of vehicles and providing extensive services. A sign program and emergency procedures relating to flood hazard similar to that proposed for Grandview Sandbar will be established for Army Camp.

Terry. Terry consists of privately owned residences; no public services or access to the river are available, and none are proposed.

McKendree Hospital Site. Vegetation encroaching on the ruins at the McKendree hospital site will be cleared. Drainage for the access road will be improved, but the road's present gravel surface will remain. Parking for five cars will be provided near the ruins, and several picnic tables will be installed. Interpretation will be offered through wayside exhibits and a trail through the site. Visitors will be advised of the site's location by a roadside sign on McKendree Road, and reference to the site will be made in a Middle Gorge interpretive and informational brochure.

Thayer. To ensure public access to the river at Thayer, the National Park Service will either acquire and develop a site or negotiate a cooperative agreement with a private owner. Evaluation of the historical significance of the federally owned church will be formally completed; if found eligible for the National Register, the church will be protected, as will its interior furnishings. Simple wayside interpretation will explain the significance of the town and church.

Campsites for Boater Use. Uncontrolled use of riverside campsites will continue, subject to

monitoring. No campsites will be designated, and no new sites or facilities will be added. A public education program will be developed to ensure users' careful attention to disposal of human waste and trash. Should such a voluntary program fail, mandatory practices such as carrying out all trash and human waste will be instituted, and the possibility of designating campsites will be reexamined.

If the privately maintained road on the west side of the river, which provides access to Silo Rapids, comes into federal ownership, it will be abandoned or incorporated into a foot trail along the river.

McKendree Road. The state will retain ownership and maintenance responsibility for McKendree road. The National Park Service will work with the state to improve shoulders, drainage, and surface so that the existing right-of-way will be available and maintained as an all-weather gravel-surfaced road for two-way traffic along the existing right-of-way of the same width (approximately 1½ lanes). No new cuts and fills or realignment will be done, and there will be no attempt to raise the road's standard to higher speed or volume.

The objective for the McKendree road is to continue providing necessary access for private landowners in Thayer and to offer a scenic low-speed driving opportunity for park visitors who want to experience the natural and cultural resources of the Middle Gorge. The National Park Service will clear a small number of strategically located vistas to allow for views of the gorge and develop a few informal roadside picnic sites. Low-key interpretation will be available at simple wayside exhibits.

Trails. The recently completed trail plan for the national river omits the Middle Gorge from any proposed trail development for the immediate future. However, should the landownership situation change in the future, it is likely that trails will be reconsidered.

INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS FOR MIDDLE GORGE

The National Park Service prepares a number of documents in analyzing and planning programs for information and interpretation of NPS areas. The first in that sequence, the *New River Gorge Interpretation Program Plan* (NPS 1989a), already has been produced. It dealt with the national river as a whole and identified the major themes that will be interpreted. In that document, the need for a specific interpretive approach for each individual planning unit was recognized.

The next step is the interpretive prospectus, which identifies specific locations in the Middle Gorge where the themes can best be addressed, designates topics to be interpreted, and proposes appropriate media (signs, brochures, guided or unguided trails, exhibits, films, slide programs).

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The *Interpretive Program Plan* contains the following principal themes, which should be regarded as priorities for all units.

New River Gorge National River today represents a change in American values and the perception of wildlands over the last 200 years — from that of wilderness as a barrier to human progress to that of wildlands for inspiration and recreation.

New River is unique because it was formed much earlier than most of the rivers we see today, and, unlike most rivers, the New has retained its course despite significant geological changes.

The character of the New River and its gorge has resulted in a significant concentration of biological and cultural diversity which is well illustrated in the park.

New River Gorge exemplifies the rapid industrialization of America at the turn of the 20th century. This industrialization

prompted major man-made changes in the gorge's ecosystem and the appearance of the landscape.

In order to successfully find, use, and enjoy park resources, visitors to the park require special information.

The Middle Gorge presents a number of opportunities to address the primary interpretive themes. For example, the recreational sites that are to be developed will require placement of directional and informational signs to help visitors select the desired destination. On arrival, visitors will need additional information to guide them to safe and enjoyable activities in line with necessary regulations.

The existence of a passable road through the gorge in this unit (the McKendree Road) presents many opportunities to interpret natural diversity in the context of a much-altered landscape slowly healing from extensive impacts of earlier logging and mining.

The small rural communities in this unit played crucial roles in America's rapid industrialization by providing raw resources (coal for energy and timber for construction).

PROPOSED INTERPRETIVE DEVELOPMENT

General Strategy

Many visitors to the Middle Gorge — private rafters, anglers, campers, and hikers — will encounter the area's resources without the personal services of trained park interpreters. This suggests that effective interpretation will have to involve signs, maps, brochures, and self-guided trails to be used independently by visitors. Similarly, the large number of visitors participating in commercial whitewater rafting generally will not see a park interpreter and may need access to static signs or exhibits. However, these visitors typically are under the

direction of private river guides who provide information primarily on safety and conduct on board rafts. This personal contact offers additional opportunities to provide expanded interpretation beyond the safety message.

Production of interpretive materials such as signs, exhibits, and brochures will be largely the responsibility of the National Park Service. Trail guides and longer publications on cultural or natural history typically may be produced in conjunction with private cooperating associations that underwrite publication costs and are responsible for sales.

Short-term and Longer-term Development

Realistically, all the proposed development will not occur immediately. The likely sequence will be (a) physical improvements to launching facilities and primitive campgrounds, and (b) development of cultural properties and the scenic drive. To accommodate this sequence, interpretive development will take place in at least two phases.

Phase I. In phase I, wayside exhibits (on-site signs incorporating text, maps, drawings or photos) focusing on river safety will be placed at Mill Creek, Grandview Sandbar, Royal, McCreery, and Army Camp. The signs might be generic and designed for use at all access or riverside camping areas within the New River Gorge National River. Generic signs are often more practical in areas of high use and potential for vandalism, since they are easier to replace than site-specific signs.

At McCreery, where the highest density of use is expected because of commercial and private raft launching, and where travelers along West Virginia Highway 41 are likely to need information, a more extensive orientation exhibit will be provided in addition to the generic safety-oriented wayside display. The orientation exhibit, perhaps similar to the existing kiosk at the new New River Gorge visitor center at Canyon Rim, should provide needed orientation to opportunities for visitor experi-

ences in the Middle Gorge and other New River Gorge units.

To take better advantage of the contact of commercial river guides with visitors, efforts will be increased to provide guides with accurate information beyond the primary safety theme. For example, natural and cultural history orientation should be provided, along with instruction on how to share this information with visitors so that they may depart with a better understanding of and appreciation for park resources.

Phase II. In phase 2, as further research leads to firm decisions on the treatment and development at other Middle Gorge sites, the following information or interpretive developments will be proposed.

Mill Creek — A short self-guided interpretive trail, focusing on the natural history of the riverside ecosystem, will begin with an initial wayside exhibit and incorporate a written trail guide. Interpretation of the farmstead will be based on the results of evaluation of its historical significance.

Quinnimont and Prince — Somewhere in the two small communities of Quinnimont and Prince, there will be interpretation of the significance of the area as the first to ship New River coal and the only riverside site of iron smelting. Subject to mutual agreement, a small exhibit on this and other community history may be placed in the Amtrak train station in Prince, which serves occasional passenger train traffic and organized Amtrak tours. Strategically located on WV 41, the station has ample parking and could offer information to both rail and road visitors. The unique history and architectural style of the station itself also should be interpreted. If the Amtrak Station is not available, an outdoor site near the post office in Quinnimont will be considered, although this would require mutual agreement with a private owner.

During the period when Quinnimont structures are being protected and held for future use,

simple wayside exhibits interpreting their relationship to local history will be installed.

Prince Brothers' Store — Safety considerations at the Prince Brothers' Store will preclude any immediate public use, including even stopping to observe the store from the outside. No on-site interpretive exhibits will be provided until some safe future use can be developed. The story of the store will be dealt with in written materials such as the McKendree Road brochure and the exhibits at the Amtrak Station.

Royal — A wayside exhibit at the proposed pull-off parking area will briefly present the history of Royal.

Army Camp — A wayside exhibit is appropriate to interpret the use of the Army Camp site by the U.S. military during World War II.

McKendree Hospital Site — In addition to signs directing visitors to the actual site of McKendree Hospital, there needs to be either a series of wayside exhibits along, or a published guide keyed to, a short interpretive trail. Topics that should be interpreted are a history of the hospital itself, the impact of the nurses'

training school on the surrounding communities, and the history of the tiny community of McKendree along the railroad tracks.

McKendree Road — When overlooks or viewpoints eventually have been identified and developed, the Park Service will provide individual wayside exhibits interpreting natural or cultural history themes present in that view or area. Alternatively, a more general brochure or an audio cassette dealing with the scenic road could be produced; this would offer an opportunity for messages on landscapes and history as well as specific sites along the road. Information could be included on mining activities, the sand shipment ruins, and the towns of Thayer, Prince, and Quinnimont.

Cost Estimates for Interpretive Development

Cost estimates for the interpretive development proposed are presented in table 3. Note that only a total figure (\$216,300) is included in the summary table 2, above. For a complete estimate of the cost of the full development plan, totals in table 3 should be added to those in table 2.

TABLE 3: COST ESTIMATES FOR INTERPRETIVE DEVELOPMENT

| Development Item | Planning and Design | Production |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Phase 1 | | |
| 5 River safety wayside exhibits | \$ 1,500 | \$ 12,700 |
| 1 Orientation exhibit at McCreery kiosk | 2,300 | 6,700 |
| Construction of McCreery kiosk | 7,500 | 30,000 |
| Subtotal | 11,300 | 49,400 |
| Phase 2 | | |
| Exhibit at Amtrak station | 23,000 | 45,000 |
| Wayside exhibits: Army Camp | 1,500 | 5,200 |
| McKendree Hospital site | 6,000 | 21,000 |
| Royal | 1,500 | 5,200 |
| Mill Creek trail | 1,500 | 5,200 |
| Mill Creek trail guide | Cooperating association | Cooperating association |
| McKendree Road guide | Cooperating association | Cooperating association |
| Subtotal | 33,500 | 81,600 |
| Possible future development | | |
| 5 Quinnimont wayside exhibits | 7,500 | 26,300 |
| Mill Creek farm wayside exhibit | 1,500 | 5,200 |
| Subtotal | 9,000 | 31,500 |
| Grand total | 53,800 | 162,500 |
| Total, both categories | | 216,300 |

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The *Environmental Assessment* (NPS 1993b) provides considerable detail on anticipated environmental consequences of implementing either the preferred alternative or the various other options considered. Table 2 contains a condensed summary of the consequences anticipated only for the actions proposed in this final plan.

Overall, the actions proposed should have a beneficial effect on natural resources. For example, in several instances, existing informally used riverside camping areas or boat launch areas will be formalized with controls on indiscriminate parking, launching, and camping. These controls will lessen the erosion and soil impacts in sensitive riparian areas in the long term; short-term disturbance to soils and some noise-level increases can be expected during construction phases. Effects on cultural resources selected for stabilization generally will be positive, but it cannot be absolutely guaranteed that there will be no losses from vandalism, since no properties are scheduled to be converted to active use and/or occupancy.

In cases where construction is being proposed, surveys for archeological or historic remains will be carried out before construction and will guide site-specific design.

As required by provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, a separate finding of no significant impact related to this plan has been prepared and is included in this document as appendix B.

ESTIMATED COSTS

The costs associated with implementing this plan have been estimated. They appear in table 2, along with summaries of proposed development and anticipated environmental impacts. The estimates, which were prepared with the use of standard NPS guidelines known as "type C estimating," should be considered only as preliminary figures. The *gross construction* entries in the table include provi-

sions for construction supervision and contingencies. The *advance planning* entry refers to more precise comprehensive design and cost estimating for proposed structures, roads, or other facilities and will result in much more accurate estimates that will ultimately be used in funding requests for construction.

Two other anticipated cost categories have been included in the "Middle Gorge unit overall" entry in the cost column of table 2. *Interpretive cost* is the sum of estimated capital or other one-time costs for all interpretive developments discussed in the "Interpretive Prospectus" chapter of the this document (see table 3). This sum should properly be added to capital costs of other construction to obtain the most comprehensive estimate of capital costs of the whole plan. *Recurring operational cost* is an estimate of the amount of operational funding (annual salaries of additional personnel, support, and routine maintenance) above the national river's current operational budget that will be associated with additional facilities or programs proposed in this development concept plan. The \$127,000 annual figure in table 2 is derived from the more detailed estimate displayed in table 4.

TABLE 4: ANNUAL RECURRING COSTS FOR PARK OPERATION AFTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

| Additional Need | Cost |
|--|------------------|
| <i>Interpretation and Visitor Services</i> | |
| 1 seasonal GS-5 park ranger | \$ 15,000 |
| Supplies | 2,000 |
| Vehicle | 3,000 |
| Subtotal | \$ 20,000 |
| <i>Resource Management and Visitor Protection</i> | |
| 1 permanent GS-6/7 park ranger | \$ 34,000 |
| Supplies | 5,000 |
| Vehicle | 3,000 |
| Subtotal | \$ 42,000 |
| <i>Maintenance</i> | |
| 4 seasonal WG-5 maintenance workers | \$ 45,000 |
| Supplies | 13,000 |
| Utilities | 3,000 |
| Vehicles | 4,000 |
| Subtotal | \$ 65,000 |
| Total Recurring Costs | \$127,000 |

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In the preparation of this *Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus*, the planning team organized and conducted several general public meetings in communities most related to Middle Gorge development. In addition, the team sought out and solicited comments from several citizen or business groups known to have special interest in the Middle Gorge.

Early public involvement was conducted in two stages. The first stage, generally known as *scoping*, was intended to identify major issues and concerns that the public would like to see addressed in the plan. Citizens and groups involved in scoping had an opportunity to be included on a mailing list to receive further information and be involved in additional reviews. The second stage, often considered optional but here considered essential to keep the public informed and involved, was an informal review of draft alternatives before the National Park Service selected a preferred alternative.

The third stage of public involvement consisted of formally providing a draft plan to the public for written review of the alternatives and the preferred course of action. Responses to this draft have been considered and addressed in proposing this final plan for implementation. The meetings, contacts, and reviews that took place during public involvement for the Middle Gorge *Development Concept Plan/Interpretive*

Prospectus are summarized in table 5 and in appendix C.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

In addition to oral comments, during the public meeting at McCreery on November 29, 1990, the planning team received a citizens' petition signed by 108 residents of Army Camp road, Prince, Quinnimont, McCreery, and Terry, West Virginia. The petition was a strongly worded recommendation that the National Park Service consider development at Army Camp to improve the entry road, provide some level of camping and picnic facilities, and provide additional ranger patrols to address what was characterized as "drinking and disorderly gatherings" and fears for personal safety by family groups seeking to picnic and camp.

That petition and other specific comments and suggestions received during all meetings have been incorporated into the files of this planning project. The main issues and concerns

TABLE 5: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONTACTS

| Type of Contact/Specific Event | Date | Location | Estimated Attendance |
|--|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Scoping | | | |
| Public meeting | 11/28/90 | Glen Jean | 30 |
| Public meeting | 11/28/90 | McCreery | 70 |
| Meeting with commercial rafters ¹ | 1/16/91 | Glen Jean | 4 |
| Meeting with private boaters ² | 1/17/91 | Glen Jean | 3 |
| Review of alternatives | | | |
| Meeting with private boaters ² | 7/8/91 | Charleston | 18 |
| Meeting with commercial rafters ¹ | 7/10/91 | Glen Jean | 6 |
| Public meeting | 7/10/91 | Glen Jean | 35 |
| Public meeting | 7/11/91 | McCreery | 45 |
| Review of draft document | | | |
| Written review solicited | 4/20/93– 5/20/93 | All participants | 300+ copies |

1. Members of the West Virginia Professional Outfitters Association.
2. Members of the West Virginia Wildwater Association.

that were expressed played a direct role in the development of the various alternatives presented in the draft plan. The final plan, though not necessarily adopting all suggestions received in public review, reflects the professional analysis of the planning team and a consideration of the environmental impacts of the various options considered.

The principal issues and concerns that arose during public involvement were the following:

River Access

Use of Middle Gorge by private boaters and commercial outfitters offering raft trips has increased dramatically in the past several years and is expected to continue increasing.

A primary river access point needs to be developed to serve both commercial and private boater interests; the McCreery site appears to offer the best opportunity.

Secondary access points would be appreciated at one or more of the following locations: Grandview Sandbar, Army Camp, Mill Creek, or Thayer.

Roads

McKendree Road has definite potential as a scenic route, and certain improvements should be provided to facilitate its use. However, the present width and gravel surface should not be upgraded because of concern that those improvements might increase use too much and encourage excessive speed.

The National Park Service should consider the implications of development at Thurmond and Grandview (the former state park) and possible long-range effects such as increased traffic along McKendree Road.

Recreation

In addition to provision of services for commercial and private boaters, attention should be paid to other traditional users of the Middle Gorge such as campers, bank fishermen, and picnickers. Facilities for day use and camping at Army Camp, Grandview Sandbar, and possibly Mill Creek would meet many of the needs of these users.

There is growing interest in hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding in the Middle Gorge; some consideration should be given to these activities.

Cultural Resources and Interpretation

Certain cultural resources in the Middle Gorge area are locally perceived to be historically significant. These include the Prince Brothers' Store, McKendree Hospital site, buildings, monuments, the furnace and coke ovens in Quinnimont, and the farm at Mill Creek. Consideration should be given to further protection of these sites and their interpretation so that local residents and visitors may better appreciate their importance in the history of the New River.

CONSULTATION, COORDINATION, AND COMPLIANCE

Natural Resources

Development on the floodplain of the New River within the Middle Gorge will comply with the guidelines of the Water Resources Council for implementing Executive Order 11988: "Floodplain Management" (*Federal Register*, February 10, 1978). A required document known as a statement of findings has been prepared and is included in this final plan as appendix D. The statement summarizes the findings of the floodplain investigation and the design requirements.

Surveys and mapping for the National Wetland Inventory have not been completed for this area of West Virginia. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be consulted before proposed development is begun to determine the potential for wetlands. If development is proposed in probable wetland areas, the NPS Water Resources Division will have to determine the wetland delineations.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Army Corps of Engineers have been consulted for compliance with section 404(b) (1) of the Clean Water Act. Upon completion of site-specific designs, the National Park Service will obtain the appropriate federal and state permits.

The Park Service will continue consultation with the USFWS and the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources regarding site-specific surveys for rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species. Any development will be preceded by necessary clearances from federal and state agencies.

To address concerns about possible erosion and storm water runoff, the National Park Service will consult with the state of West Virginia and will file a sedimentation plan with the state before beginning any development or construction.

Cultural Resources

All undertakings proposed in this plan that could potentially affect significant cultural re-

sources will be reviewed in accordance with the 1990 programmatic agreement among the National Park Service, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Adherence to the provisions of that agreement will satisfy National Park Service responsibilities under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

As outlined in stipulation C of the programmatic agreement, undertakings that have been determined to be programmatic exclusions will be reviewed internally within the National Park Service for conformance with NPS cultural resource policies and guidelines. (Examples of programmatic exclusions are preservation, maintenance, stabilization, and limited rehabilitation work consistent with the secretary of the interior's standards.)

All other undertakings will be reviewed in consultation with the West Virginia state historic preservation officer and the Advisory Council under the council's regulations (36 CFR 800) implementing section 106.

Appendix E to this plan is a list of the plan's proposed actions that are expected to be programmatic exclusions and the actions that will require further consultation with the state historic preservation office. The appendix includes relevant correspondence with the state historic preservation office during consultation.

APPENDIX A: CULTURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS

INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service has certain obligations to ensure protection of resources listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This involves consideration of the several protection strategies outlined below. Selection of a particular treatment is done in consultation with others, in particular, state historic preservation offices, as described in the "Consultation, Coordination, and Compliance" section.

A site or structure may be physically protected through *stabilization* of deteriorating walls, foundations, exterior coverings, or interior finish. Stabilization may be selected when there is an intention to allow some form of public use or to install interpretive information; this action will protect the structure as well as ensure safety of the visitor. Stabilization also may be elected as a kind of "holding" action when a public or operational use is not immediately planned, but some future use is anticipated and desirable.

Another option beyond stabilization is *restoration*, meaning to bring a structure back in careful and precise detail to a certain period, usually to interpret as a example of that period. Another level is *rehabilitation*, when the structure is adapted to some public use that will not compromise its historical integrity, such as a museum or a workplace for local artisans, who might also demonstrate or sell traditional crafts. Rehabilitation typically involves restoration of the external parts and some internal modifications to provide for the modern use, but without substantially altering the building's historic appearance.

Other uses of rehabilitated buildings could be those that would benefit operation of the park: a building might be used as an employee residence, a ranger station, or a maintenance division office.

A fourth option is *reconstruction*, in which a building is duplicated with new materials, but to original specifications. This option typically is selected when a structure is beyond repair yet is clearly needed for interpretation.

An alternate possibility might be to move the structure intact and restore or rehabilitate it in another location where protection is better assured and a legitimate public or operational use is feasible. Moving raises the question of whether the structure's historic integrity would be unacceptably compromised, which may be the case when the structure and site are closely related.

There is yet another option, selected only when a listed structure may have seriously deteriorated to the point that it has lost its historic integrity, has become irreparable, is a safety hazard, or otherwise cannot be protected. This is to carefully study, measure, photograph, and record the structure and then demolish it. Another choice, in which study and documentation also are required, is to simply let the structure deteriorate and eventually disappear. This solution usually is acceptable only in isolated areas, where safety is not an issue. For a property listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, these two treatments are considered adverse impacts, and they require especially close collaboration with the state historic preservation office and the Advisory Council on Historic Places as well as the general public.

Selecting any of these options either as an alternative or later as a preferred treatment depends on a number of considerations. For example, it is important to understand the history and use of the building and to be able to relate it to the story of the park in general and its major interpretive themes. If there are direct and important relationships to this wider story, then there is good potential for the building or site in interpreting the park to visitors. If, on the other hand, these relationships are weak or the site's significance is limited to a very local area, the interpretive potential also is limited.

In addition to understanding the interpretive potential of a site, it is essential to study the feasibility and safety of letting the public approach or enter the area. If allowing the public to drive to and park near the structure would cause significant disturbance to the historic scene, this would influence the selection of a preferred

alternative. Since visitor safety is one of the highest priorities in park operations, allowing public use would be acceptable only if safe approach, parking, and entry could be assured.

The physical condition of a structure and the feasibility of correcting safety concerns within the building also are issues. Similarly, the safety of park employees must be considered if the alternative is to adapt the structure to a park operational use.

Finally, since financial resources are limited and must be prioritized, the cost of various protection alternatives must be considered. Important in assessment of the difficulty and cost of various protection strategies are the physical state of a building, especially its main structural features such as foundation, floor supports, walls and roof, and the degree to which the building may have been altered over the years (its integrity). For example, the cost of stabilizing and providing simple security measures, which is the minimum level of protection the park is required to provide, may be all that can currently be afforded; restoration or rehabilitation costs, which typically are much higher, may be impractical to consider at the time so that they must be scheduled for some future date. Even if demolition is selected, there would be costs associated with required surveys and consultation procedures as well as physical removal.

With this introduction, the following discussion of specific cultural sites in the Middle Gorge is provided to help the reader understand why the various alternatives, including the preferred alternative, have been presented.

DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC SITES

Prince Brothers' Store

This analysis provides background for three alternatives: stabilize and protect the Prince Brothers' Store building as part of the historic scene without allowing public use; proceed with some level of restoration and public use with on-site parking; or survey, document, and then demolish the structure.

The store is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its eligibility derives from its local significance as the sole remaining example of a long-standing and successful private general merchandise store and its association with a prominent Middle Gorge family whose forebears helped establish the community of Prince. Architecturally it illustrates many features of the "Victorian boomtown" style of frame structures in West Virginia; relatively few such structures still remain. The store is especially interesting because it has undergone relatively little change externally or internally since its original construction around the turn of the 20th century.

Because it was a store and U.S. post office for more than 70 years, the store played an important role as a location for both commerce and social contact from about 1900 through 1984 in the little community of Prince. Prince was typical of the Middle Gorge towns that existed primarily to switch, load, and service the railroad and the coal and timber industries it served. But Prince itself was not exclusively a mining town; this explains why the town's principal store was privately developed rather than company owned.

In terms of its relationship to principal interpretive themes already established for New River (see "Planning Objectives and Issues" section), the store and its representation of the town bear mostly on rapid industrialization at the turn of the century, and human-caused changes in the gorge's ecosystem and appearance.

If the store could be interpreted only from the outside, interpretation would be a brief description of the role it played in community life and the part the town of Prince played in the development of the New River coal, timber and transportation industries; that is, in the rapid industrialization of this section of the United States.

If the interior of the store was available, possibly as a museum or as a working store, the interpretive potential would be considerably more extensive. The store's own history, its role in the community, and a more detailed treatment of the role of Prince and other Middle Gorge communities in the coal, timber, and transportation industries could be provided. The distinction between private and company-owned stores also could be explained. Company-owned stores were

more common in small coal towns, but there are few examples of these stores left in the Gorge, and none within the national river's boundaries.

However, these interpretive potentials will be difficult to realize unless it is feasible and safe to allow public access to either the outside or the inside of the structure. There are certain constraints — the most significant is that the building, built in the early 1900s along a dirt track serving horse-drawn carts, today stands only four feet from the pavement of a modern state-owned two-lane highway where traffic speeds, although posted at 35 miles per hour, typically are 50 mph or higher. The road is confined by railroad tracks entering the nearby Amtrak station; the back of the store is located at the toe of a steeply sloping hill. A small parcel of empty federal land on the west side of the store is now used informally for parking. The federal parcel on the other side of the store contains ruins of the former Prince home.

Analysis of vehicle entry and exit to the present parking area indicates a problem with adequate sight distance; that is, the minimum visual distance needed for a motorist to safely enter and exit a highway considering the anticipated speed of the highway's traffic. The fact that the store is located on a curving, slightly undulating section of road is responsible for the sight distance problem. Before minimum sight distance criteria could be met, traffic would have to be slowed to 20 mph by aggressive signing, rumble strips, and other warnings.

An option might be to shift the store backward into the hillside. Although this would lessen the danger of the building being hit by a vehicle or of a visitor in front of the store being struck, it would not significantly improve sight distance. Use of the federal property east of the store for entry and parking would not provide adequate sight distance either, and it would destroy the ruins of the Prince home foundation. Providing parking some distance away, where sight distance was adequate, is an option, but it would require a relatively long walk along the busy highway and across private lands, and a safe pedestrian crossing of the highway would be needed. An at-grade crossing poses certain risks, and a bridge or tunnel would lead to ques-

tions about visual intrusion, cost and maintenance.

The possibility of relocating the building to a place where safe parking could be made available raises other concerns. The most relevant is that if this building was moved even a short distance it would lose its relationship to the historic locale — at the center of activity around the tracks, the early train station and hotel (both now gone), and the Prince family home. This would seriously compromise its integrity and lower its potential for interpretation.

Moving the store intact to a more distant location, even if a compelling use for it there was recognized, would be impractical because of intervening railroad bridges and narrow winding roads; it probably would have to be dismantled and reassembled. This would lead to compromise of historic integrity even if interpretive value remained.

Analysis of the condition and integrity of the store by a historic architect and a structural engineer reveals that the major structural components are still intact and functioning. The structural problems that were noted — a foundation that could fail if not repaired and a deteriorating wooden sill — will not pose serious problems to correct. External stabilization of these and a few other components, including deteriorated clapboards and window trim, would not be very costly or difficult, but there is a chance that other problems have not yet been discovered.

Rehabilitation as a museum, a store to be leased out, or an employee residence would entail the same external stabilization plus repair of non-structural ceiling, wall, and floor deterioration in the building's interior, reinstallation of electrical and water service to local code, and many other repairs. None of these repairs appear complicated, but they would be labor-intensive and costly if the store's historical integrity was to be maintained.

To complete this analysis of the interpretive potential, safety, and feasibility, of the Prince Brothers' Store, costs have been estimated for several different treatments of the store, as shown in table A-1. These are very general and

preliminary, based only on the size of the store (4,440 sq. ft., or 2,200 sq. ft. each floor). The treatments marked with an asterisk are those considered as alternatives.

In summary, it appears that the Prince Brothers Store is locally significant and does have a relationship to the park's primary interpretive themes. It has some interpretive potential even if only available to the public from the outside, but its greatest value would be as a museum or working store open to the public, if rehabilitation for such a use is possible. However, it seems that providing safe access to the store, for the public to view externally or to enter, or for employee use, would be very difficult.

Moving the store to a different location, either nearby or distant, would compromise the building's integrity to the extent that its interpretive potential would be very low. The cost of various levels of treatment ranges from a low of \$17,500 to document and demolish it to \$1,180,000 to relocate and rehabilitate it.

Structures in Quinnimont

The remaining federally owned structures in Quinnimont (four former residences and their outbuildings, and a small church) are potentially

eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district, but they have not yet been nominated. The loss of a sixth federal structure, the Ashley-Plumley House, in July 1992 and the previous loss of another, both to fires started by vandals, though unfortunate, probably will not affect the eligibility of the district

The five Quinnimont structures have varied histories and interpretive potential. Four are basically residences. The Ashley-Plumley House (recently burned) was the largest and most elaborate; the Kessler House was originally a school, then a church and then a residence. The two Bowles houses (of similar floor plan) apparently were built as residences, as was the Willis House. The relatively newer Missionary Baptist Church building has been a church for many years, but it may have been built for another purpose. The Kessler House is the most architecturally distinctive of the remaining structures; it has some high fashion details and attractive design. The other residential buildings, although not architecturally remarkable, are examples of West Virginia's common building types in that historical period.

The greatest interpretive potential would be realized if these buildings were presented as illustrating the development and significance of

TABLE A-1: ESTIMATED COSTS FOR DIFFERENT TREATMENTS, PRINCE BROTHERS' STORE

| Option | Includes | Cost/ Gross Construction Cost |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| *Stabilization in Place; No Public Parking or Entry | Removal of vegetation, clearing of trees; installation of foundation drain; repair of parapet and coping; repair or replacement of sill beam and stud/joists; installation of louvers for ventilation; fire detection and burglar alarms | \$114,000 |
| Stabilization or Shifting Backward; No Public Parking or Entry | All above plus moving building backward 10-25 feet and additional foundation work | \$180,000 |
| *Rehabilitation in Place, Public and/or NPS Staff Use | External restoration and interior rehabilitation, with improvement of structure and utilities for use as a museum and working general store or employee residence; burglar alarm and fire sprinkler system; adjacent parking for eight vehicles | \$1,090,000 |
| Relocation and Rehabilitation; Public Use | Rehabilitation as above after moving building to a distant location; preparation for public use | \$1,180,000 |
| *Survey, Documentation, and Demolition | Measurements, photographs and other documentation to Historic American Buildings Survey Level I; demolition of structure and restoration of site, with necessary SHPO consultation | \$17,500 |

little towns like Quinnimont, that is, as the historic scene of a company town. The potential for rehabilitation of any of the buildings for use by the public or for park operations seems limited. The building known as the Missionary Baptist Church is still used as a gathering place by a small group of Quinnimont residents, and use by the general public would not be appropriate. The now unavailable Plumley House was located within view of the highway and was large enough to have had some potential as a museum, but the next best candidate, Kessler House, is farther from the road, smaller, and probably inappropriate for such adaptive use.

All these buildings are still structurally sound and would not present serious problems for either stabilization or rehabilitation. Current problems involve mostly roof leakage, which could lead to interior damage if not corrected, and localized foundation failures, which are less urgent but would have to be remedied before public use could be allowed. Only the church, with its periodic use and caretaking by a community group, appears to be maintaining its condition, although there are some structural problems that need immediate attention.

In the absence of stabilization, the other, structures are gradually deteriorating and probably would reach a condition from which they could not easily be recovered in three to five years. This estimate does not include unpredictable events of vandalism and possible fires, which in the past three years claimed two of the seven structures originally purchased.

All the Quinnimont buildings but the Willis House are accessible from an unpaved road that leads off WV 41. Both intersections of this road meet sight distance requirements, provided speed limits of 30 mph are effectively enforced. Should some public use be proposed either for external interpretation or inside the structures, it would be possible to provide a few parking spaces along this unpaved road. Parking along the road edge of WV 41 does not appear to be a safe alternative. Access to the Willis House, on the river side of the highway, is not safe for the general public because the access road at WV 41 enters at an acute angle.

None of the federally owned structures are particularly well-located for potential visitor use. The most convenient location for safety in exiting and entering the flow of traffic on WV 41 is in the area of the U.S. Post Office and an adjacent privately owned residence and an unoccupied garage. That area also is closest to the geographic center of what remains of Quinnimont. There is no federally owned land in this location.

In table A-2 a comparison is presented of estimated costs to stabilize, adaptively restore, or document and then demolish each of the five Quinnimont structures. These are class "C" estimates; they are subject to considerable revision when more specific plans are developed.

In summary, it appears that the highest interpretive potential for the federally owned structures in Quinnimont is not as individual structures but as a collective representation of the historic scene. Simple interpretation from outside the

TABLE A-2: COSTS OF VARIOUS TREATMENTS OF QUINNIMONT STRUCTURES

| Structure Name | Stabilization | Rehabilitation | Documentation and Demolition |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Kessler House (1,570 sq.ft.) | \$112,000 | \$320,000 | \$6,500 |
| Quinnimont Church (1,120 sq.ft.) | 45,000 (+ 5,000 immediately) | 233,000 | 6,000 |
| J. Bowles House (950 sq.ft.) | 56,000 | 138,000 | 3,000 |
| R. Bowles House (980 sq.ft.) | 66,000 | 142,000 | 3,000 |
| Willis House (1,500 sq.ft.) | 92,000 | 216,000 | 3,000 |

buildings is all that would be required for this. No compelling need to rehabilitate any of them for public or park use is indicated. It would be possible to provide safe parking and road access to most of these structures if desired, but it would not be very convenient in terms of visitor use. A more central location from which a variety of stories about Quinnimont could be told would be preferable. However, other locations are not federally owned.

The McKendree Hospital Site

The McKendree Hospital site, also under consideration for listing on the national register, represents an interesting story that could be related to the park's broader themes of coal, railroading and timber industries because it is tied to the health of industry workers. The hospital buildings have no potential for restoration since nothing but foundation traces remain. Only some of the major retaining walls, which define the extent of the site, are candidates for stabilization. It seems most appropriate that the story be told through existing historic photographs to contrast to the current obliterated site. Clearing of some vegetation and minimal stabilization of the retaining walls (costing less than \$3,000) would aid in this contrast. Low-key interpretation and self-discovery seems the best approach in this area, which probably will not be visited much over the next several years.

Thayer

The church in Thayer, the single federal property in this tiny community, is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. There is an opportunity to interpret not only the structure but the history of the community and this section of the gorge. Not much information is available on the building itself, but it does not appear distinctive in form or architectural style. It has no current public use, formal or informal, and is unoccupied.

No operational use of the church building has been suggested by park management. The nearby McKendree Road is little used and presents few safety hazards for one or two vehicles parked in front of the building. The Thayer church might be made available as a community center, but this option has not been assessed within the community. It does not seem to warrant conversion to a museum, a ranger office, or an employee residence at this time, given the small visitation anticipated through the area. Its location close to occupied dwellings probably affords some protection from vandalism and unauthorized use.

Costs to stabilize the Thayer Church are estimated at \$46,000; restoration costs are estimated at \$92,000; to document and then demolish would cost an estimated total of \$5,000.

**APPENDIX B: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
MIDDLE GORGE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN / INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS
NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL RIVER, WEST VIRGINIA**

INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service has prepared an environmental assessment on a development concept plan and interpretive prospectus for the Middle Gorge planning unit of the New River Gorge National River. The plan and prospectus deal with providing public access to this portion of the New River, certain recreational activities, and interpretation, and with preservation and management of the area's cultural and natural resources. The document was distributed for public review approximately April 23, 1993.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES
OF THE PROPOSAL**

Natural Resources

Short-term construction impacts on riparian vegetation, soils, air quality, and noise levels can be expected at the proposed launch site at McCreery and at the primitive campgrounds at Army Camp, Grandview Sandbar, and Mill Creek as existing informal sites and access roads are improved. Most construction will be in areas where both soils and vegetation have previously been disturbed.

In the longer term, better erosion control and decreased damage to adjacent vegetation will result from improved control of vehicles near the campsites, definition of allowed sites, better drainage, routine maintenance, and paved entry roads and parking at McCreery. Parts of the McCreery launch site and primitive campgrounds will be located within the 100-year floodplain. A statement of findings prepared in conjunction

with the final plan (see appendix D) concludes that these proposed developments should have no adverse effects on the natural floodplains.

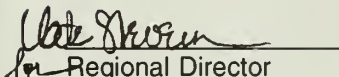
Cultural Resources

Archeological evaluations will be required before any ground-disturbing activities take place. An archeologist will be on site to monitor excavations.

Stabilization of, and installation of alarm systems in, certain historic structures in Prince and Quinimont will provide improved protection against deterioration, vandalism, and fire. A higher level of protection could result if ultimately the buildings are adapted to uses involving active occupancy and monitoring. Increased access to these sites and to the traces of other historic structures at Royal and the McKendree Hospital area may result in inadvertent disturbance, which can be partially mitigated by cautionary signing and ranger contacts.

CONCLUSION

The preferred alternative as described in the March 1993 draft *Development Concept Plan/ Interpretive Prospectus/Environmental Assessment* for Middle Gorge does not constitute a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of human environment as defined in section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190, 83 Stat. 953). Therefore, the National Park Service will not prepare an environmental impact statement.



Regional Director
Mid-Atlantic Region

12/22/93
Date

APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING PUBLIC REVIEW

During formal review of the draft environmental assessment in April and May 1993, comments were received from the general public, the West Virginia state historic preservation officer (SHPO), and the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR). Some additional comments were provided by the superintendent, New River Gorge National River, dealing with items that had changed since earlier reviews or had been overlooked inadvertently. The following sections summarize or present verbatim those comments, and note how they may have been addressed in this final plan.

COMMENTS FROM GENERAL PUBLIC

Only three written comments were received from private citizens. All generally supported the preferred alternative but had some specific comments and concerns. Two quite opposing views were expressed about stabilization of historic structures in Prince and Quinnimont: one citizen felt it was quite appropriate to continue protecting and stabilizing these structures, especially Prince Brothers' Store, in anticipation of some future use; another wrote with what she suggested was a general community concern that the Prince Brothers' Store had been a factor in numerous accidents and should be removed. That commenter also suggested that the Quinnimont structures should be removed so that the area could be cleaned up. One commenter who is a private kayaker would have preferred designated campsites along the river as a means of controlling what he expects will be increasing trash problems. There was support for picnic facilities and trails in the gorge.

The final plan addresses these concerns as follows: The planning team, the state historic preservation officer, and others continue to be concerned over the treatment of the Prince Brothers' Store and Quinnimont structures. The proposed action remains as it was in the preferred alternative; that is, to stabilize and protect the structures, provide barriers to reduce danger at the Prince Brothers' Store, and hold the properties for some later public use. However, the final proposal does add a commitment by the

National Park Service to actively seek public input on possible uses (such as a small general store, or a bed-and-breakfast establishment in the case of Quinnimont) and resolutions to the safety concerns. Should there be no feasible suggested uses, the possibility of removing the structures will be reconsidered.

Concerning designated campsites on the river, the final plan continues the preferred alternative, in which campsites will not be designated, but reiterates the option to become progressively more restrictive if monitoring demonstrates there are problems.

Trails in the gorge have been deferred to some later period because there currently is not enough public land to provide continuous corridors; picnic facilities are included in the final proposal.

COMMENTS FROM STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

A letter from the West Virginia state historic preservation officer dated June 30, 1993, is reproduced in full near the end of this appendix. The final plan addresses these comments as follows: The general concerns about what is characterized as "... low key and small scale commitment ..." to cultural resources and the more specific comments were explored in an August, 1993, meeting between the SHPO, the superintendent of the New River Gorge National River, and the historic preservation staff of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, National Park Service. The perspectives of each of these groups were presented; there was reaffirmation of the need for concern for all Middle Gorge historic resources and agreement that where protection and preservation are concerned, it is not productive to speak of "minor" or "secondary status" resources.

However, the participants agreed they gained a better understanding of the practical problems that park managers have in protecting historic structures, especially where there are public safety concerns and limited opportunities for

adaptive use. Specifically, it was agreed that the preferred alternative treatments at Prince Brothers' Store and Quinnimont (stabilization and installation of alarms, with no immediate public use) are appropriate first steps. As a second step, however, an active effort will be made to involve the public in generating specific suggestions (fall 1993) for use of these structures.

If practicable, and if safety issues can be resolved, these suggestions will be incorporated into the Middle Gorge DCP proposals. If there are no such suggestions, there will be serious reconsideration of the option of recording and documenting the structures and then removing them, following established procedures where an adverse effect is predicted.

The SHPO also requested further information of DCP proposed projects that might need further consultation and those that may be considered subject to programmatic exclusion under recent agreements. Appendix E details anticipated future consultation.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

An opportunity to review the draft *Development Concept Plan* was provided to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, but no response was received.

COMMENTS FROM WEST VIRGINIA DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

In summary, the DNR's Wildlife Resources Division generally favored the preferred alternative but commented that designated campsites along the river (not proposed) would provide better protection to riparian habitat than uncontrolled camping. A specific comment on environmental documentation noted a lack of information on wildlife other than endangered species and corrected misleading statements about the importance of the New River in fisheries.

In response to these comments, additional information has been incorporated into the natural

resource description, especially in reference to wild turkey, deer, bear, and furbearers, many of which are subject to legal hunting within the national river. Management of wildlife and regulation of hunting are the responsibility of the state of West Virginia; no proposals in the current plan are anticipated to have any direct effect on hunting. If, as provided for by regulation, the superintendent of New River Gorge National River determines in the future that an aspect of this activity in the Middle Gorge is having unacceptable impacts on public safety or resource protection, certain areas or seasons might be closed in consultation with the state. As noted earlier, designated campsites are still an option if monitoring reveals unacceptable impacts.

COMMENTS FROM SUPERINTENDENT, NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL RIVER

The superintendent of the national river and his staff commented that there was no discussion of increased annual operational costs for the preferred alternative, expressed concern over maintenance costs for historic structures, suggested discussion of water quality problems in Piney Creek, asked for specific guidance on a possible Middle Gorge operational center to deal with patrol and maintenance when the proposed plan has been implemented, and suggested removal of unneeded structures at McCreery.

The above suggestions have now been added to the proposed actions in the DCP. Only the adaptive use or removal of certain structures at McCreery and restoration of the vegetation had not been analyzed in the environmental assessment. None of those structures, all acquired in the recent purchase of this parcel, appears to be historically significant. However, modification or removal will be undertaken in consultation with the SHPO (see appendix E regarding programmatic exclusions and other projects). The land on which these structures are located has been extensively modified in the past and supports little or no native vegetation, and it does not lie within a floodplain. No adverse effects on natural resources are expected.

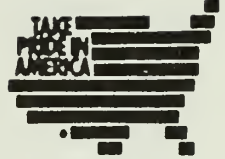


IN REPLY REFER TO

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mid-Atlantic Region
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106



D18(MAR-CRM)

JUN 21 1993

William M. Drennen
State Historic Preservation Officer
Department of Culture and History
Cultural Center
Capitol Complex
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Mr. Drennen: *Bill*

The National Park Service is submitting a draft Development Concept Plan/Interpretative Prospectus/Environmental Assessment for your review and comment under Stipulation E of the 1990 Programmatic Agreement among the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. The document represents planning efforts for the Middle Gorge unit of the New River Gorge National River. The Middle Gorge unit of the New River Gorge National River, covers an area extending north from Mill Creek to a point south of Stone Cliff. This unit of the park falls within Raleigh and Fayette Counties, West Virginia.

The preferred alternative (alternative "D") in this draft document, seeks to balance traditional on-river activities with a variety of land-based activities. Several of the planning alternatives have the potential to affect historic properties that are presently listed on, or are potentially eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places. These properties include the Prince Brother Stores, Quinimont, McKendree Hospital site and Thayer, and are addressed in the appendix on pages 67-73. Those undertakings that are found to be "programmatic exclusions" under Stipulation C of the 1990 Programmatic Agreement, and those requiring further review with your office and/or the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, will be listed in the final planning document.

We would appreciate your comments on this document at your earliest possible convenience, so they will be available to us as we move forward with this planning effort. Although this planning effort is being undertaken by our Denver Service Center office, please direct your comments or concerns to my office, Attention: Diann Jacox. Ms. Jacox may be reached at (215) 597-6524.

Sincerely,

John J. Reynolds
John J. Reynolds
Regional Director

Enclosure

cc:
Superintendent, New River Gorge NR



WEST VIRGINIA DIVISION OF
CULTURE AND HISTORY

June 30, 1993

John J. Reynolds
Regional Director
National Park Service
Mid Atlantic Region
143 S. Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

ATTN: Katherine Stevenson

RE: Development Concept Plan - Middle Gorge Unit, New River
FR# 93-861-MULTI

Dear Ms. Stevenson,

This letter serves as our review and comments regarding the Development Concept Plan/Interpretative Prospectus/Environmental Assessment for the Middle Gorge unit of the New River Gorge National River.

First, it is apparent that the NPS is taking a more conservative approach toward describing eligibility of cultural resources, erring on the side of eligibility. We would encourage the use of existing survey efforts to complete and finalize the List of Classified Structures. It would certainly benefit NPS in its future planning efforts. With a finite number of structural resources, surely eligibility can be resolved once and for all.

This conservative approach appears to have also been applied to the proposed management decisions for identified cultural resources in the Middle Gorge. The preferred alternative does not strongly advocate financial largesse for the maintenance and/or rehabilitation to protect what are clearly significant cultural resources in the Gorge. Alternative D is identified as the "balanced" approach as opposed to Alternative C, which is entitled "Activities on River Shore and Land Emphasized". Alternative D reveals an emphasis on the River Shore. Over 1.2 million dollars is estimated for development at McCreery. The closest competitor to this figure is Quinnimont, approximately .5 million. The Prince Brothers Store merits only \$135,800 in the preferred alternative. Only in Alternative C do we see a lavish expenditure on all resources, both water and land associated.

Page 2
Katherine Stevenson
June 29, 1993

The language of the report also demonstrates this conservative development approach to the cultural resources. In Table 1, structural resources are guaranteed stabilization, maintenance and protection by use of fire and burglar alarms. On page 28, resources at Quinnimont are guaranteed "indefinite protection through stabilization; potential for vandalism and fire partially [emphasis added] mitigated by alarm systems. These buildings won't be completely safe, will they? The overall summary statement on page 25 indicates "provision of ... small scale developments for activities on both river and land; low-key interpretation".

This low key and small scale commitment by NPS for these cultural resources is worrisome. The plan reveals that existing resources have already been destroyed by fire and structural deterioration. By benign neglect, many eligible resources will suffer adverse effects. The plan does not provide a convincing statement that NPS will discharge its duties towards cultural resources.

Clearly there are problems to be faced. For example, the Prince Brothers Store has many obstacles and drawbacks. On the positive side, it is the only frame company store in the Gorge. As the plan states, it is untraditional, atypical of coal company stores. Before eliminating possibilities, consider the positive. It is a unique resource to the Gorge. The same argument holds true for Quinnimont resources. Interpretation at the McKendree Hospital site also could be exciting. These sites could prove to be intriguing interpretations of the New River coal mining industry.

Finally, what is the indirect value of resources if structures are removed, as stated on page 28? Does the value rest in their documentation or in markers by the sites of demolished structures?

The plan refers to the original General Management Plan for the entire New River Gorge establishing a precedent for planning objectives. However, upon a brief review of this eleven year old document, it appears that emphasis was placed primarily on Thurmond and Kaymoor, resources which have received much attention since that time. The inherent inference must be all other resources are minor and delegated to secondary status.

We are not convinced that all other cultural resources in the Gorge are "minor" resources and should be treated as such. Perhaps the context statement that is currently under draft can clarify the cultural priorities of the New River Gorge National River. For purposes of this DCP we are reluctant to be "low key" and "small scale." Obviously, we are not footing the bill and can shoot for the moon, but if finances play a role in the DCP than these choices should be so described. We encourage the NPS to be "high key" and "large scale". Let budget cuts fall where they may.

Page 3
Katherine Stevenson
June 29, 1993

With respect to completion of the Section 106 review process, recent DCPs have included appendices that delineated which resources and activities affecting them would be submitted for individual review. Will this DCP be revised to include such a list? Please continue to inform us of archaeological survey activity. We have appreciated the opportunities to visit survey sites.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and generous extension of the comment period. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or Susan Pierce of my staff.

Sincerely,



William G. Farrar, Deputy
State Historic Preservation Officer

WGF/SMP:ps

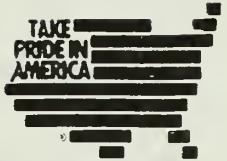


IN REPLY REFER TO

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mid-Atlantic Region
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106



D18(MAR-CRM)

JUN 21 1993

Robert D. Bush
Executive Director
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Old Post Office Building
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW #809
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Dr. Bush: *Bob*

The National Park Service is submitting a draft Development Concept Plan/Interpretative Prospectus/Environmental Assessment for your review and comment under Stipulation E of the 1990 Programmatic Agreement among the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. The document represents planning efforts for the Middle Gorge unit of the New River Gorge National River. The Middle Gorge unit of the New River Gorge National River, covers an area extending north from Mill Creek to a point south of Stone Cliff. This unit of the park falls within Raleigh and Fayette Counties, West Virginia.

The preferred alternative (alternative "D") in this draft document, seeks to balance traditional on-river activities with a variety of land-based activities. Several of the planning alternatives have the potential to affect historic properties that are presently listed on, or are potentially eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places. These properties include the Prince Brother Stores, Quinimont, McKendree Hospital site and Thayer, all are addressed in the appendix on pages 67-73. Those undertakings that are considered "programmatic exclusions" under Stipulation C of the 1990 Programmatic Agreement, and those requiring further review with your office and/or the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer will be listed in the final planning document.

We would appreciate your comments on this document at your earliest possible convenience, so they will be available to us as we move forward with this planning effort. Although this planning effort is being undertaken by our Denver Service Center office, please direct your comments or concerns to my office, Attention: Diann Jacox. Ms. Jacox may be reached at (215) 597-6524.

Sincerely,

John J. Reynolds
for John J. Reynolds
Regional Director

Enclosure

cc:
Superintendent, New River Gorge NR

**APPENDIX D: STATEMENT OF FINDINGS
DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN/INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS/
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
MIDDLE GORGE, NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL RIVER**

INTRODUCTION

New River Gorge National River is located in southeastern West Virginia. It was established to conserve and interpret outstanding natural, scenic, and historic values and objects in and around the New River Gorge.

The national river has been divided into units to facilitate detailed planning. The Middle Gorge unit is roughly the central third of the national river, where the New River has fewer rapids than elsewhere in the park, attracting a growing number of visitors interested in this level of river rafting and kayaking. Fishing from the bank or from a drifting small boat is popular, and several riverside camping areas have been used informally for years. The atmosphere along this section of river is quiet and rural, with a number of cultural sites that provide a glimpse of what the New River area was like during busier times of exploitation of coal and timber resources.

The National Park Service is in the process of adopting a *Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus* (DCP/IP) for the Middle Gorge. The plan deals primarily with providing a formalized launching facility at McCreery for commercial and private boaters, some improvements at three riverside primitive campgrounds, and treatment of historic properties. The 1982 *General Management Plan* (GMP) for the national river called for increased management of river-based recreation and improved water access. The GMP was preceded by an *Environmental Assessment* prepared in August 1982 (NPS 1982), and a finding of no significant impact was approved in October 1982.

Executive Order 11988 ("Floodplain Management") requires the National Park Service and other federal agencies to evaluate the likely impacts of actions in floodplains. The objective is to avoid to the extent possible long- and short-term impacts associated with occupancy, modification, or destruction of floodplains and to avoid indirect support of development and new construction in such areas wherever there is a practicable alternative.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE FLOODPLAIN

Facilities or developments selected from among the proposals of the draft DCP/IP/EA that would lie at least partially within the 100-year floodplain are the improved staging and launching area at McCreery and certain improvements in primitive camping sites at Grandview Sandbar, Army Camp, and Mill Creek.

McCreery

The primary objective of the launch facility at McCreery is to provide adequate, safe, and environmentally sound access for commercial and private boaters seeking recreational opportunities within the Middle Gorge. The site, which was modified by the placement of fill by previous owners and has been periodically maintained by the National Park Service, has been used by boaters for many years. The current unplanned access requires difficult maneuvering of equipment and passengers at the river's edge. The parking situation requires that passengers of commercial outfitters, as well as some private boaters, must cross a busy adjacent highway.

The proposal for this site ("the project") is to develop a high-quality launch facility for commercial and private boaters (see map: McCreery Launch Site, Proposed Development). The project would include a redesigned traffic pattern to facilitate safe entry of large vehicles and drop-off of boaters and equipment, a stabilized launch ramp, paved parking and driving surfaces with curbs, a changing room, and comfort facilities served by running water, electricity and a septic system. As indicated on the McCreery Floodplain map in the plan, the launch ramp itself and a portion of the proposed access road would lie within the 100-year floodplain; the other support facilities would be outside this area.

The facility is water-related, and the launching ramp must be located at the river's edge to function. There are no practical alternatives that would locate the entire facility outside the 100-year or even the 2-year or 25-year floodplains.

Alternative sites were evaluated as part of the environmental assessment in the draft DCP; all shared the requirement that at least the launch ramp itself be located at the river's edge. Some would have required that support facilities (such as parking areas and a changing facility) also be located also within the floodplain. In addition to providing a minimum of the total facility within the floodplain, the McCreery site had the advantage of already having been affected by informal use, being in a central location, being near the major highway, being the site generally preferred by boaters who have historically used the area.

The assessment also evaluated a no-action alternative in which river access would have continued informally at the site. This option was not considered feasible without environmental and safety improvements.

There are no floodplain standards (or ordinances) for the state of West Virginia or Raleigh County. Periodic flooding does occur at the site. At times since the site has become federal property, the National Park Service has shaped and graded the launch area to provide temporary stability, a situation that is not acceptable in the long term because of cost and the potential for erosion and its adverse effects on water quality.

The project will provide longer-term stability and decrease the frequency of adding fill by placing cribbing and rip-rap in the immediate area of the launch ramp, by controlling surface runoff through appropriate drainage, and by stabilization of surfaces through graveling or other landscaping. The current informally placed fill will be tested to determine the extent of necessary stabilization. Sanitation facilities, access roads, and parking, which are to be located above the floodplain, all will be designed and constructed to mitigate adverse effects to the floodplain. All mitigating actions will conform to the standards and criteria of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP; 44 CFR 60). The site can be closed upon determination by the superintendent of the national river that public safety and property were at risk in the event of major flooding. Siting this facility within the 100-year floodplain will not adversely affect the natural floodplain values.

Information used in preparing the floodplain map in the DCP was taken from a U.S. Geological Survey report entitled "Flood Investigation of the New River in New River Gorge National River, West Virginia" (1991), and the Flood Insurance Rate Map, Raleigh County West Virginia, Panel Number 5401698 0050 B, December 18, 1984.

Army Camp, Grandview Sandbar, and Mill Creek

The proposed actions at Army Camp, Grandview Sandbar, and Mill Creek, which currently consist of unimproved informal riverside camping areas where vehicles pull into bare spaces in shore vegetation, are much less extensive than at McCreery. Generally the actions will consist of reorganizing the informal access roads to current sites, prohibiting access to particularly sensitive sites, and placement of

picnic tables and appropriate self-contained (off-site disposal) toilet facilities. Although no floodplain map is provided in the DCP/IP/EA, it is known that the camping sites and lower access roads are within the 100-year zone. Survey work to determine if there are feasible locations for toilets outside that zone has not been done.

These three campgrounds will retain their classification of "primitive," with no utilities, no paved tent platforms or access roads, and little fixed equipment except possibly picnic tables and the toilet facilities. Some ground disturbance may be necessary during rearrangement of access to specific sites, but the main access roads will remain in the same locations and receive only periodic maintenance or gravel.

If possible the toilet facilities will be located outside the 100-year floodplain; if they cannot be placed outside, an appropriate design will be chosen that will seal off accumulated wastes so they will not contaminate flooding waters. Any other fixed facilities within the floodplain will be chosen so that their installation and future use will not have permanent adverse effects on floodplain values. Siting these minimal facilities within the floodplain should not have adverse effects on the natural values of the floodplain.

It is recognized that providing primitive campsites within the 100-year floodplain along a major river does involve some risk for park visitors who choose to use these facilities. However, the New River does not typically rise very rapidly such as in a flash flood in a minor tributary, and the Bluestone Dam upstream provides considerable buffering of potential floodwaters, allowing dam operators time to inform NPS officials of any impending flood releases. To address and mitigate this risk, the Park Service will have in place an emergency procedure which outlines all reasonable efforts that will be taken to notify campers of potential flood emergencies, and a plan for evacuating the campgrounds if necessary.

CONCLUSION

The siting of the proposed developments in the preferred alternative of the DCP/IP/EA for Middle Gorge, New River Gorge National River, should have no adverse effects on the natural floodplains of the New River or its tributaries within the national river.

RECOMMENDED: Joe L. Kennedy
Superintendent, New River Gorge National River

9/30/93
Date

APPROVED: Charles P. Clapp Jr.
Regional Director, Mid-Atlantic Region

10/13/93
Date

APPENDIX E: CULTURAL RESOURCE COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Under the 1990 programmatic agreement among the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, the *Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus* for Middle Gorge is subject to review according to section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. In accordance with stipulation E.4 of the programmatic agreement, the National Park Service, in consultation with the state historic preservation office, is required to "make a determination about which undertakings are programmatic exclusions under C.1, and for all other undertakings, whether there is sufficient information about resources and potential effects on those resources to seek review and comment under 36 CFR Part 800.4-6 during the plan review process."

Proposed undertakings in the Middle Gorge are summarized in table 2 of this final document. A list of specific undertakings discussed in the plan is presented below. Based on the National Park Service's determination of how these undertakings are addressed by the 1990 programmatic agreement, they are categorized as either: (1) programmatic exclusions (undertakings identified in stipulation C.1 of the programmatic agreement and not requiring further review by the state historic preservation officer [SHPO] or the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation before implementation), or (2) undertakings requiring consultation with the SHPO and possibly the advisory council during project design stages.

SECTION I: ACTIONS COVERED BY PROGRAMMATIC EXCLUSIONS

The actions listed below will require internal NPS section 106 compliance.

1. Preservation maintenance/stabilization as defined in NPS-28 and consistent with the secretary of the interior's "Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties" (applicable to historic structures at Quinnimont, Prince Brothers' Store, and Thayer church

and foundation remains at Royal, McKendree Hospital site, and Army Camp) (exclusion a).

2. Regrading or regravelling of existing roads within previously disturbed areas at Grandview Sandbar, Mill Creek, and Army Camp (exclusion g).
3. Historical, architectural, and archeological investigations of historic structures and grounds for documentation and research purposes (exclusion d).
4. Installation of fire detection and security alarm systems (exclusion k).
5. Placement of signs and wayside exhibits (exclusion l).
6. Placement of protective barriers along Highway 41 at informal parking areas to discourage parking at the Prince Brothers' Store (exclusion j).
7. Acquisition or lease of property at Thayer for boat launch access point (exclusion e).

SECTION II: UNDERTAKINGS REQUIRING FURTHER CONSULTATION

The undertakings listed in this section will require consultation with the SHPO and possibly the advisory council during project design stages.

1. Designation of spur roads, campsites, and parking area and placement of vault toilets at Mill Creek. Assessment of significance of farmstead and treatment of property.
2. Construction of new parking area, trails, and trail access at Royal.
3. Removal of two modern residences at Terry Beach.
4. Improvements to access road drainage, construction of parking area, and place-

ment of picnic tables at McKendree Hospital site.

5. Development of day-use area and campground facilities at Grandview Sandbar, including placement/construction of parking facilities, spur roads, campsites, and vault toilets.
6. Development of boat launch facilities at McCreery, including redesign of traffic patterns, removal of modern structures, and installation of site utilities. New construction will include parking facilities, an operations center, and a changing/comfort building.
7. Development of campsites and day-use areas and placement of vault toilets at Army Camp.
8. Development of riverside site at Thayer for public access.
9. Development of picnic areas and vista clearing along McKendree Road.
10. Ultimate treatment and use of Prince Brothers' Store and historic structures at Quinnimont following additional public input on the disposition of these properties.



IN REPLY REFER TO

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mid-Atlantic Region
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106



H30(MAR-PRP)

November 2, 1993

William G. Farrar
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Division of Culture and History
The Cultural Center
Capitol Complex
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Mr. Farrar:

Thank you for your review comments dated June 30, 1993 pertaining to the March 1993 draft Development Concept Plan (DCP) for the Middle Gorge Unit of the New River Gorge National River. As you know, National Park Service representatives from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office subsequently met with your staff concerning the issues raised in your review of the plan.

The present letter specifically addresses your comment that in accordance with Stipulation E.4 of the 1990 Programmatic Agreement (PA) the National Park Service, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is required to "make a determination about which undertakings are programmatic exclusions under C.1 and for all other undertakings, where there is sufficient information about resources and potential effects on those resources to seek review and comment under 36 CFR 800.4-6 during the plan review process."

Proposed undertakings are summarized in Table One of the March 1993 draft document (pp. 25-31) under Alternative D. These undertakings are identical with what will be presented in the final document with the exception that the final document will state that further public input will be sought on potential adaptive use of the Prince Brothers Store and the historic structures at Quinnimont. This decision was reached in the earlier discussions with your office. Although not expected to have an effect on historic properties, another undertaking now proposed that was not identified in the present draft DCP, but which will appear in the final document, is the construction of a park operations and storage facility at McCreery to serve visitor protection and maintenance needs.

A list of specific undertakings discussed in the plan is presented below. Based on the National Park Service's determination of how these undertakings are addressed by the 1990 PA, they are categorized as either:

I. "Programmatic exclusions" (undertakings identified in Stipulation C.1 of the PA and not requiring further review by the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, prior to implementation, or

II. Undertakings requiring consultation with the SHPO and possibly the Advisory Council during project design and prior to implementation.

Section I: Actions Covered by Programmatic Exclusions (These actions will require internal NPS Section 106 compliance review.)

1. Preservation maintenance/stabilization as defined in NPS-28 and consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. (Applicable to historic structures at Quinnimont, Prince Brothers' Store and Thayer Church and foundation remains at Royal, McKendree Hospital site and Army Camp). C.1(a).
2. Regrading or regravelling of existing roads within previously disturbed areas at Grandview Sandbar, Mill Creek and Army Camp. C.1(g).
3. Historical, architectural and archeological investigations of historic structures and grounds for documentation and research purposes. C.1(d).
4. Installation of fire detection and security alarm systems. C.1(k).
5. Placement of signs and wayside exhibits. C.1(l).
6. Placement of protective barriers along Highway 41 at informal parking areas to discourage parking at the Prince Brothers Store. C.1(j).
7. Acquisition of property at Thayer for boat launch access point. C.1(e).

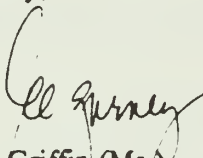
Section II: Undertakings Requiring Further Consultation with SHPO and maybe Advisory Council.

1. Designation of spur roads, campsites, parking area and placement of vault toilets at Mill Creek. Assessment of significance of farmstead and treatment of property.
2. Construction of new parking area, trails and trail access at Royal.
3. Removal of two modern residences at Terry Beach.
4. Improvements to access road drainage, construction of parking area and placement of picnic tables at McKendree Hospital site.

5. Development of day-use area and campground facilities at Grandview Sandbar including placement/construction of parking facilities, spur roads, campsites and vault toilets.
6. Development of boat launch facilities at McCreery including redesign of existing traffic patterns, removal of existing modern structures and installation of site utilities. New construction will include parking facilities, an operations center, and a changing/comfort building.
7. Development of campsites and day-use areas, and placement of vault toilets at Army Camp.
8. Development of riverside site at Thayer to provide for public access.
9. Development of picnic sites and vista clearing along McKendree Road.
10. Ultimate treatment and use of Prince Brothers Store and historic structures at Quinnimont following additional public input on the disposition of these properties.

We look forward to receiving your comments on our determination of which proposed undertakings will require additional consultation with your office, and request your comments at your earliest possible convenience. When finalized, this list will appear in the final Development Concept Plan for Middle Gorge. Please continue to address all Section 106 comments or concerns to this office, Attention: Diann Jacox. Ms. Jacox can be reached at (215) 597-6524.

Sincerely,

for 
B. J. Griffin (Ms.)
Regional Director
Mid-Atlantic Region

cc:

Superintendent, New River Gorge NR
Martha Catlin, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation



DEC 1993
Received
Cultural
Resources

November 19, 1993

B. J. Griffin
Regional Director
Mid Atlantic Region
National Park Service
143 S. Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

RE: Middle Gorge, New River Gorge National River
Development Concept Plan
FR# 93-861-MULTI

Dear Ms. Griffin,

Thank you for your letter dated November 2 regarding the proposed categorical exclusions for the Middle Gorge DCP. We accept the described delineation of activities as appropriate and in keeping with the 1990 NPS programmatic agreement. It is our understanding that a meeting is proposed for December 8 to discuss these issues. We look forward to continued consultation.

Sincerely,


William G. Farrar, Deputy
State Historic Preservation Officer

WGF/SMP:ps

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PLANNING TEAM

Denver Service Center

Alan Robinson, Team Captain/Natural Resource Specialist
Sarah Bransom, Natural Resource Specialist
James Butterfuss, Landscape Architect
Jeff Garrett, Landscape Architect
Carol McNulty-Huffman, Natural Resource Specialist
Greg Schuster, Landscape Architect
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New River Gorge National River

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

